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PREFACE.

It has been stated on the highest authority that the Irish question has now entered on the "reflective stage"; and the officers of the National Radical Union have obtained the consent of Mr. Chamberlain to a republication of his speeches on the subject, in the hope of contributing thereby to its comprehension and early settlement.

During the heated controversy of the past few months nothing has been more remarkable than the vagueness of the phrases used indifferently by either side, and the consequent difficulty of framing an issue on which the discussion could usefully be continued. On the one hand, the extension of local government in Ireland and the control by the Irish people of its purely domestic business; and on the other, the maintenance of the integrity of the Empire, the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, and the protection of minorities—have been almost universally accepted as the essential factors of the pro-

blem; and the split in the Liberal party, which has reduced it to present impotence, while it seriously threatens its future influence, has been wholly caused by the hasty and ill-judged proposals by which the late Government sought to give effect to these conditions.

The National Radical Union offered a strenuous and successful resistance to the Bills of Mr. Gladstone, in the belief that they failed entirely to provide the guarantees declared by their author to be necessary, and that they would have infallibly led to a total separation between the two countries, after a prolonged period of unrest and possibly of civil war, during which all measures of political and social progress in the United Kingdom would have been necessarily delayed.

But the Union has consistently maintained that the objects sought for were not in themselves unreasonable or unattainable, and that alternative methods might be devised which would not be open to the objections that have been fatal to Mr. Gladstone's Bills.

These views are fully expressed in the speeches delivered by the President of the Union during a series of years extending from 1881 to 1887.

The policy of the Liberal party before its recent amazing conversion, the conditions of the problem, the

practical objections to the dual scheme of the late Government, and the broad lines of an alternative settlement, will all be found in the following pages, which are now submitted by the officers, both as a justification of their past action, and also as an indication of the policy on which alone the reunion of the Liberal party, that potent instrument of reform and progress, can possibly be effected.

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SPEECHES ON THE IRISH QUESTION

BY THE RIGHT HON.

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

BIRMINGHAM, June 7th, 1881.

IRELAND BEFORE THE LAND ACT.

[In the course of a speech to his constituents in defence of the general policy of the Government, Mr. Chamberlain made the following observations on the state of Ireland, and the dual policy of redress of grievances and suppression of crime, to which the Liberal Cabinet had pledged itself.]

Sir, I now approach the last subject upon which I shall venture to address you. In referring to the state of Ireland I do so under the gravest sense of the responsibility attaching to any one who touches upon such a theme. At this moment an excitable people, suffering under the sense of long-continued injustice and wrong (hear, hear), only lately coming out of great tribulation, having endured hardship unexampled and extraordinary privation, having barely escaped starvation in consequence of the extraordinary efforts of public charity—these people, with such a character and under such conditions, are being encouraged by leaders in whom they have placed their confidence—(hear, hear)—to defy what they believe to be an unjust law (cheers), and to seek by disorder, and even by violence, to redress their grievances. Under these circum-

stances, when class is set against class, when any moment may bring about a collision which will fill all our minds with horror, no true friend of Ireland would dare to say anything which could add fuel to the flame (cheers). "The condition of Ireland is desperate and critical." These are not my words; these are the words of Mr. Smith, the late First Lord of the Admiralty, in the debate on the second reading of the Land Bill. Mr. Smith went on to say that this condition of things was the fault of the Government, who had delayed too long, and had been reluctant in applying for extraordinary powers, and who, when they obtained them, had been weak and languid in enforcing them. Well, that is an hypothesis which might have some weight, to which some importance might be attached, if it were not unfortunately the case that the state of Ireland, desperate and critical as it is, is not exceptional. The state of Ireland during the last half-century has been one of almost chronic disorder. Here you have a people who, by consent of friend and foe, are remarkable in ordinary times for their obedience to the ordinary law (hear, hear), a people whose history is signalised by a singular and admirable absence of ordinary crime, and yet you have them from time to time breaking out into paroxysms of agrarian violence and disorder. Under these circumstances it is perfectly evident, I think, to every right-thinking man that the causes of this disorder are more deep-seated than Mr. Smith chooses to suppose, and that they are not to be found solely in the action of this or of any previous Government. They are to be found in the condition of the people themselves, and we must cut deep if we want to get at the bottom of the matter. In past times English statesmen, unfortunately, have only had one way of dealing with what they call Irish disaffection. They have applied coercion quickly enough, and they have applied it stringently enough to satisfy even the Tories; and it cannot be said of them, at all events, that the restrictive measures which they have adopted have been languidly enforced. We have had, I have read somewhere, fifty Coercion Acts—Acts of repression in Ireland—since 1830 (shame). That is one for every year in the half-century which has elapsed since that date. Well, what has

been the result? Ireland is still discontented. Ireland is still suffering from periodical fits of disorder.

The Tithe War.

Now, I want to call your attention to one illustration of past policy in reference to this matter. In 1831 there was an outbreak of disorder which in many respects is very similar to the one which we are now witnessing. It was a strike by the Irish people against the payment of tithes, and is known in history as the tithe war; and when it broke out the Government took the usual steps—they passed Whiteboy Acts, they passed an Arms Act, they passed a Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; but in spite of this action on the part of the English Government, outrages, and secret outrages especially, still continued, and in 1833—two years after the disturbances first broke out—Lord Stanley, who is better known as the late Earl of Derby, but who was then Chief Secretary for Ireland in the House of Commons, told the House of Commons that "the record of crime in Ireland almost surpasses belief." In one county—the county of Kilkenny—there were 32 murders and attempts at murder, 34 burnings of houses, 178 assaults with danger to life, 519 burglaries, and 34 houghings of cattle. Bad as is the state of things which we now recognise in Ireland, it is nothing like so bad as things were in 1833. But why have I laid before you this statement of what happened so long ago? It is because I think that this experience and much which has happened since is a proof of the truth of the maxim which Mr. Bright laid down in this hall—(cheers)—some months ago, and which has been much questioned since, and which says that force is no remedy (applause). Mind, that does not say that force may not be necessary (hear, hear), but it is no remedy. If a man is ill—if he suffers from fever, and becomes delirious, his friends may probably put a strait waistcoat on him to prevent him from injuring himself and those around him (applause). But if in doing this they said that they thought it to be a cure and a specific for the fever, they would be considered by all of us to be out of their senses. The Government of a free country is bound to take every step, every means in its

power, in order to secure obedience to the law (loud cheers). The law is the safeguard of the liberty of every one of us (cheers). The law means the protection of the weak against the strong, and if any class sets itself above the law, and if a Government should abet them in doing so, then I say there would be an end of all the constitutional guarantees of our personal liberties (applause). On the other hand, the Government—any Government—is bound to do its best to alter and amend the law where it thinks it to be unjust (hear, hear, and applause). These are two duties of a Government which run together, and which cannot be separated. The late Lord Beaconsfield, when he was Mr. Disraeli, and was addressing himself to a somewhat similar subject, said one of the wisest things which, I believe, he ever spoke. He described to the House of Commons the then condition of Ireland, and he wound up by saying, "What should be the duty, under these circumstances, of an English statesman? Your duty is to effect by peaceful and constitutional means all that a revolution would effect by force" (hear, hear, and applause).

Failure of the Land Act of 1870.

Well, Sir, that was precisely what Mr. Gladstone attempted to do by the Land Act of 1870. That Act, as we all know, was not a complete success. Its partial failure was due to two things. It was due, in the first place, to the action of the House of Lords, who on this, as on so many other previous occasions, mutilated and destroyed the effect of Bills sent up to it from the Lower House, and it was partly due to the action of some of the landlords of Ireland, who unwisely endeavoured to escape from the conditions of the Act—conditions which might have enabled them to establish on a firm and friendly footing their relations with their tenants, and who by slow degrees raised the rents upon the holders of land until the burden became too great to be borne. Between 1870 and 1876 there was over a large part of Ireland a great rise in rents. This took place, not in jumps, but in small gradual advances, no single one which the tenant felt himself justified in refusing although the effect of the whole of them together was that

although he could just pay his way in good times, when the bad seasons came he was ruined hopelessly, and had to leave and give up his means of livelihood. Well now, these facts were laid before Parliament from time to time. Unfortunately they could not secure either the attention of the last Parliament or the attention of the Government. I have seen it stated in a pamphlet written by an Irishman of some note and weight, that if in 1875 the then Government had brought in a Bill to protect the tenants against the exaction of unfair rents, there would have been no agitation and no trouble whatever in Ireland (applause). Unfortunately they did nothing, and I am sorry to say it has been only too often the case in Irish affairs that we have attempted to redress grievances after too long a delay, and we have had to pay an increasing penalty every day that we have postponed our necessary action. Well, now, after this there came the recent famine. The Government made large grants of money in aid of the Irish people, grants which I am afraid, in a great number of cases, never reached the sufferers for whom they were intended; but they refused absolutely to do anything towards amending the law. Under these circumstances it was that the Land League was first formed (hear, hear, and applause). It was started in the last years of the late Government, and from that day Irish discontent has assumed an organized form. Then we took office; we took office pledged by the declarations of almost every member of the Ministry, by our avowed sympathies, by our known convictions, to do our very best at the earliest possible moment to seek out the cause, the deep underlying cause, of Irish disaffection, and, if possible, to remove it by legislation (applause). Events moved too quickly for us. Before we were well seated in office, before we had obtained the report of the Commissioners whom we appointed to examine into this matter, we were called upon to deal with one phase of the Irish difficulty. Well, we did not hesitate. We sacrificed all our preconceived plans and schemes, we gave up the programme which we had recommended to Parliament; we stopped, we delayed proceeding with English and Scotch business, and we introduced a bill—the Compensation for Disturbance Bill (applause),

which occupied many weeks of time, and which, as you know, led to a very protracted session.

COMPENSATION FOR DISTURBANCE BILL.

You will recollect the solemn warning which Mr. Gladstone, in urging the acceptance of that Bill upon the House of Commons, addressed to us in reference to the state of affairs. He said, "Ireland stands within measurable distance of civil war," and he urged that this Bill should be accepted as, in the opinion of the Government, necessary to strengthen their hands, and to enable them to secure obedience to law and order. The warning was neglected—the House of Lords—(hisses)—rejected the Bill (shame), and I say, never in the history of that House has it committed a more unwise and a more unpatriotic act (applause). If that Bill had been passed we have the assurance of the leaders of the Irish Land League themselves that they could not have successfully continued their agitation. The Bill was rejected, and civil war has begun. Class is arrayed against class in social strife, and now 30,000 soldiers and 12,000 policemen are barely sufficient to enable the Government to protect the lives and the property of the Queen's subjects in Ireland. Well, it is said sometimes that we ought to have had another session of Parliament, and that the Bill should have been sent up again to the Lords. Our critics seem to forget that we are not a despotic Government, and that we have not the power to do what we will. We can only act within the limits of the Constitution, and if we had called another session of Parliament, and if we had sent up the Bill to the House of Lords, inasmuch as we were only able to secure a comparatively small majority in its favour in the House of Commons on the first occasion, I believe it is probable that the Bill would have been again rejected. It is said we might have dissolved Parliament; but if you consider that we had only had a general election a few months before, and the effect of such a proposal at a time when Ireland was seething with disaffection, I think you will feel that it is one which no reasonable man would make, and which no prudent Government would be able seriously to consider.

A Message of Peace.

What is to be done now? (Applause.) Well, the Tories have no doubt whatever as to the course which we ought to pursue. By the mouths of their leaders, by their organs in the press, they urge upon the Government to put aside at once the Land Bill, to give up any attempt at remedial legislation, and to go to Parliament for more and more coercion, for the abolition of trial by jury, for the suppression of the Land League, and for other stringent and arbitrary measures. Well now, for my part I hate coercion (applause). I hate the name and I hate the thing (renewed applause). I am bound to say that I believe there is not one of my colleagues who does not hate it as I do. But then we hate disorder more (cheers). It seems to me that the issue is now with the Irish people and those who lead them. They can have no doubt any longer. It might have been possible before; they can have no doubt any longer as to the intentions of the Government. We have brought in a Land Bill (prolonged applause). We have offered our message of peace to the Irish people. It is a Bill indeed which Lord Salisbury professes that he cannot understand; but I don't find his want of intelligence has prevented him from denouncing it in the strongest terms. It is a Bill which Sir Stafford Northcote appears to consider of no importance, for he urges the Government to give to the House of Commons some proposals of really serious legislation which would justify the absence of obstructive proceedings. But this Bill which Lord Salisbury cannot understand—this Bill which Sir Stafford Northcote thinks to be of no importance—has been, I am glad to say, accepted generally as to its main principles, in the spirit in which it has been conceived, by all that is most reasonable and intelligent amongst the Irish people (applause). I do not say that it may not be susceptible of amendment, but I say that, as it stands, and, speaking generally of its main provisions, that it has been welcomed by the majority of the Irish press. It has been frankly accepted as satisfactory by the whole of Ulster. It has been approved—I am always speaking of its main proposals—it has been approved by the Roman Catholic clergy, and let me say, in passing, that although there have been of urse some

exceptions, I think the action of the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland during these disturbances has been on the whole worthy of their cloth—(applause)—and of their religion, and that the influence to which their sympathies with the people justly entitle them has been exercised on the whole on the side of law and order. Well, Sir, this Bill, as I say, has been accepted in its main provisions by the Roman Catholic clergy. It has been accepted by the representatives of Ireland. Out of 101 of them, only seven were found to vote against the second reading of the Bill, and of those seven, three, I believe, were members of the late Government. This Bill has been accepted as, at all events, a basis of a satisfactory settlement. We have pledged ourselves to do everything which lies within our power to carry it to a speedy and satisfactory conclusion. We have staked our existence upon it (loud cheers). There is no possibility of retreat. And now, just let me tell you in a few words what this Bill which Lord Salisbury cannot understand really is. I fancy that the intelligence of Birmingham working men will at least be equal to a demand which has proved too great a strain on Lord Salisbury's attention (laughter). This is a Bill which provides, in the first place, for an impartial tribunal, to which every small tenant in Ireland can go in order to fix a fair rent between himself and his landlord if they should happen to disagree. This Bill permits every small tenant to sell his goodwill or tenant-right for the best price he can get for it, if he wishes to exchange or leave his holding; and in this way it secures him absolutely in all the improvements which he may make upon the land. It gives to him also security of tenure in his holding, provided he fulfils the reasonable requirements and conditions of the tenancy. And, in addition to that, it affords facilities greater than have ever been suggested before, whereby many of these tenants, at all events, will be able on reasonable and moderate terms to acquire full possession of the land which they now occupy as tenants (applause). A few weeks, or at most a month or two, must settle the fate of the Government and the fate of this measure. May we not call a truce, under these circumstances, in the bitter civil war, which, as I have said, is going on? I appeal to the landlords first, who have in

many cases been very longsuffering and patient, to have yet a little more forbearance with their tenants, at all events during the time which must intervene before their relations with them are finally settled. I hope, also, that I may venture to appeal to the Irish people (applause). I appeal to them as I appealed to them, I am sorry to say without success, before—I appeal to them not to play into the hands of their enemies (cheers). I appeal to them not to make the policy of conciliation difficult or even impossible for us by acts of violence and disorder which every honest man condemns (applause). I believe, if we could tide over this intervening time, or if we could by some magic power secure the immediate passage of this Bill, that we should have a settlement of this disastrous state of things. The Tories say that it would not be a final settlement. Well, perhaps not. There is no finality in politics (applause), and every generation in turn must solve its own problems, and carry forward to a successful issue its own reforms (applause). But at least we should have done our duty—at least we should have dealt with the question of the moment, and until some new grievance might arise to be dealt with, with equal justice, and I hope with greater promptitude—until such time, at least, we should have established the relations of the Irish people on a satisfactory footing.

OBSTRUCTION.

Sir, I am afraid there are two parties who do not want a settlement of this question (applause), and those are the Tories and the leaders of the Land League (applause). Since the Easter holidays every day of Government time has been given, without intermission, in order to promote the progress of this great and vitally important measure, and yet, up to the present day only six lines of the Bill, which consists of over a thousand lines, have passed through Committee. There are some people who think that the time may shortly come when a review of the position and functions of the House of Lords may not be an inappropriate subject for the consideration of the English people (applause); but I venture to say that the urgent question of the moment, the point to which every reformer should now direct his first attention, is the reform of the pro-

cedure of the House of Commons. The House of Commons has ceased to be able to represent or give effect to the will of the majority of the nation. It has sunk into a great debating society, without power to come to a decision, or to register and carry out the mandate which it has received from the constituencies. And while discussion is prolonged in the House of Commons the gloom of the situation in Ireland extends and deepens. Our talk never slackens; neither does the agitation in Ireland. And I am sometimes afraid lest even this great measure of reform may come too late, and provisions which would be satisfactory, which would be gratefully accepted, if they could be immediately accorded, may yet be rejected if they are indefinitely postponed.

The Land Leaguers.

Now, why is it this important decision is so long delayed? In the first place the Government has to deal with the ill-concealed—I might almost say the avowed—hostility of a certain section of the leaders of the Irish party. There is no secret about what I am going to say. There is no dispute about it. Mr. Parnell and those who follow him have never concealed the fact that their chief object is not the removal of grievances in Ireland, but the separation of Ireland from England (hear, hear). Why only a few months ago, Mr Parnell, speaking in Ireland, said that he would never have joined the Land League, he would have taken no part in this great agitation which has been called into existence to redeem the Irish people from the consequences of centuries of wrong, he would have taken no part in that agitation, if he had not thought it would have helped him in the Nationalist and Separatist movement in which he chiefly takes an interest. How can we satisfy these men? Our object is not the same as theirs; we want to remove every just cause of grievance. They want to magnify grievances and to intensify differences. We want to unite the Irish people and the English and the Scotch in bonds of amity. We want, I say, to bind the Irish people to this country in bonds of amity and cordial union (hear, hear), just as much as Scotland is united to England, although the time was when Scotchmen

felt as bitter hostility to the union as Irishmen now profess to feel. Well, under these circumstances, I find that the gentlemen to whom I have referred do not openly oppose the Land Bill, because, I believe, they are well aware that their constituents would not justify them in such a course (hear, hear). But they are not unwilling to put obstacles in its way. They are not unwilling to raise motions for adjournment or to put questions which lead to debate, and which take up the precious time of the House, which ought to be expended solely in the promotion of this measure; and above all, they try by agitation to force upon the Government impossible concessions (hear, hear), the effect of which, if only we were to accept them, they know would be that the Bill would very likely be rejected by the House of Commons, and would certainly be rejected by the House of Peers. Now, I observe, at a meeting which was held on Sunday last in Hyde Park, Mr. Parnell made a suggestion that the Government should refuse in the future to allow the soldiery or police in Ireland to be employed in the protection of the officers who are carrying out the law. I do not think that Mr. Parnell himself sees exactly the whole of the fatal consequences which would follow the adoption of such a suggestion. Let us see what it amounts to? It amounts to this—that any Government which thinks a law unjust should at once set itself above the law, and should refuse to allow that law to be put in force (hear, hear). What is it which gives security to all of us? What is it which enables every one of you—the humblest among you—to feel that your homes are protected from violence, and that the persons and lives of those who are dear to you are safe from outrages? Why, it is the sense that you have the support and assistance of the law, so long as you obey the law (loud applause). And it is the sense that behind the law there is all the force of a mighty empire, all the power that the strongest Government can wield. I say, if you take this security from us, you take from us everything which guarantees our liberties and our freedom. It is all very well for us now to say this law is unjust. The Tory Government which follows us may think another law equally open to objection, and Government after

Government will set up a separate despotism of its own, and the freedom and liberties of three kingdoms will be destroyed (applause). Well, but there are other considerations also which must be weighed in this matter. An eviction may be, and in some cases it is, a harsh and oppressive act (hear, hear); but on the other hand it may be—no one can deny it—it may be the only way in which a landlord may be able to obtain a fair and moderate rent, upon which the livelihood of himself and family depends. I say that in such a case as I have described the landlord's rent is as much his property as your coat or your money is yours (loud applause). Mr. Parnell tells us—in the House of Commons—that the advice which he has given to Irish tenants is that they are not to pay unjust rents (hear, hear). Well, there is a good deal to be said about such a proposition as that. Is every man to be judge in his own case what is just and what is unjust? I don't think even the best and most honest amongst us could be trusted in every case to pay his full debts under such circumstances as these (applause). But unfortunately this is not all. Whatever Mr. Parnell may do, other leaders of the Land League in Ireland and elsewhere have advised the people not to pay any rent at all. And it is a fact that in hundreds and thousands of cases, the Irish tenants are following this baneful advice. The problem before the Government is not a small one. What we want to find out is this: we want to try how we can protect the honest tenant from the unjust procedure on the part of a cruel and harsh landlord; and we want, on the other hand, to do that so that we may not at the same time protect the dishonest tenant in his dishonesty (hear, hear), and help him to take advantage of this agitation to rob his creditors, refusing, with money in his pockets, to pay his landlord, who perhaps is poorer than himself (applause).

Tory Opposition.

Then the Bill has also been delayed by the action of the Tories, who are striving by amendments and by discussion to force upon the Government provisions for the compensation of the landlords for what they call the confiscation of their pro-

perty. I very much doubt whether these amendments are really suggested by Irish landlords, who, I believe, as a rule, are only anxious for a reasonable settlement. I am inclined to think they are suggested by English landlords, who are afraid of inconvenient precedents (applause). But in any case I say that these amendments are unreasonable, and ought to be rejected (applause). What have we to compensate the landlords of Ireland for? We do not propose to do anything above and beyond this—to make compulsory upon all landlords the practice which we are assured the majority of landlords, and certainly of good landlords, already adopt. Good landlords do not rack their tenants. Why should bad landlords be compensated for a legal right which they cannot equitably exercise? A good landlord will not forfeit the property or the improvements of his tenants, and he will not lightly evict from his holding—which perhaps is the only means of livelihood which the tenant has—a man who, by himself and his family, has remained perhaps longer on the ground even than the landlord who is in authority over him; yet bad landlords have done this in some cases, and might do in many more, and I cannot conceive that they have any right to claim compensation for the restriction and limitation of powers which they ought never to have been permitted to enjoy. In our English legislation there are numberless precedents in which legal rights have been found to be in conflict with public morality and public interest, and have been restricted and limited, and I am not aware of any such cases in which compensation has been given to those who have been thus treated. Irish landlords must look for their real compensation for any sacrifice, if sacrifice it be which they are called upon to make, in the fact that it is only in some restriction of their rights that their relations with their tenants can possibly be replaced in a friendly and satisfactory condition; and as the rights of Irish landlords are now only maintained by the presence of an English garrison, and would not exist for a moment if that garrison were removed, it appears to me that the English people which maintains this garrison is entitled to a voice in settling the conditions under which the protection which they give shall continue to be afforded (applause).

Maximum and Minimum.

Well now, gentlemen, I have brought down the narrative to the present time. I cannot attempt, I will not venture to predict the future. The Government is striving to steer an even course between extremes. We have been told that the Bill which we have brought in is the minimum which the Irish people can accept. I believe it is the maximum which any English Parliament will pass. We pursue the work in which we are engaged under circumstances of some discouragement. We cannot count upon, we do not ask for, the assistance of our opponents. We meet with scant consideration from those whom we are attempting to serve. I feel that I have detained you too long (no). I thank you most sincerely for the patience with which you have listened to me. I shall have served some purpose if I have brought before you the difficulties by which the Government finds itself encompassed; and if I have shown you also the spirit in which we are endeavouring to overcome them. I trust also that I may have made clear to you the alternative policy which is offered by our opponents for your adoption. It is now for you to choose between us. I can only say for myself, that I have not found office so free from care and from anxiety that I am greatly desirous of its long continuance. I accepted it with hesitation; I shall resign it without reluctance. But there is one thing in connection with it which I shall never forget, and that is—that I have been permitted, for however short a time and in however humble a capacity, to be associated with the ablest and the noblest of English statesmen (cheers), in a policy which I believe to be just and wise in its conception, which I know to be humane and beneficent in its intention, which I firmly trust will yet be crowned with signal success, and which, I think, will be recognised by future generations as the greatest achievement of a long and splendid public life (loud cheers).

NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION MEETING AT LIVERPOOL, October 25th, 1881.

AFTER THE LAND ACT.

[The Liberal Government had devoted the greater part of the Session of 1881 to passing a Land Act, which was accepted by the Irish party as securing to Irish tenants the demand formulated on their behalf by the Land League, and popularly known as the three F's—fair rent, fixity of tenure, and free sale. In the meantime, however, the organization of the League had passed under the control of the agents of Irish revolutionary societies; and outrage and assassination prevailed over a great part of Ireland. It was evident that the object of the League was now changed, and that a determined effort was being made to render all government impossible. In these circumstances the Cabinet resolved on suppressing an organization which Mr. Gladstone characterized as preaching in Ireland "the doctrines of public plunder." The following speech justified the action of the Government from the Radical standpoint.]

The Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, on rising, was received with prolonged cheers. He said—Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, when some time ago I received the invitation of the National Federation to take part in this meeting, I thought that it might very likely be my duty to address to you something like a general survey of the whole policy of the Government. No doubt there have recently been accomplished events of the greatest importance in Afghanistan, in Africa, and in Europe, which on ordinary occasions would need your serious attention. I thought, too, that I might possibly direct your attention to some of those great questions of domestic legislation to which Mr. Crosfield has just referred, and which ought always to have a large place in the programme of any Liberal Government

(cheers), and to some of those now sleeping problems, the arrears of a long period of Tory rule, and especially to those subjects which have been brought recently into prominence by the depression of trade.

The State of Ireland.

But under the circumstances in which we meet to-night I have thought I should better consult your wishes and inclinations if I left these matters to other speakers or to future occasions, although they are all matters of great intrinsic importance, but they have not the immediate interest of that great subject which is now filling our minds with grave solicitude and anxious expectation. Mr. Chairman, I think I may assume the cordiality with which the resolution has been carried, and the presence of such vast numbers here to-night, as an indication that the Liberals of Liverpool and the representatives of Liberalism gathered here from so many neighbouring places are prepared to support the Government in the measures which they have deemed it necessary to take in the interests of public safety in Ireland (hear, hear). If I were addressing an audience of Conservatives, I should expect at least as much as this (hear, hear). But from you, gentlemen, before I sit down, I shall venture to ask for more (hear, hear). I ask from you not only patriotic acquiescence in a present necessity, before which party spirit is silent and party rancour itself stands ashamed (hear, hear, and cheers), but I ask you to go with me into an examination of what has happened before, of what is still to come, and to consider the whole course and policy of the Government, of which the present situation is only one and a very partial manifestation (hear, hear).

Coercion a Hateful Incident.

I read in an article in a Tory newspaper the other day that the recent action of the Government is to be considered as a triumph of sound Conservative doctrines (hear, hear, laughter, and applause) over Radical theories in the Cabinet (laughter). Well, I need only say to you that if that were the case I do not think I should to-night have the honour of addressing you as a member of the Government (cheers). Our political

opponents are in too great haste to be glad (hear, hear). There is one cardinal distinction between them and us to which I should like to call your attention at the outset. With them coercion is a policy (hear, hear, and cheers). They have no other (hear, hear). With us it is only a hateful incident (loud cheers). We have arrived at a point at which the two opinions meet; we have travelled along very different roads, and I hope we shall soon part company again (hear, hear, and cheers). For the moment we stand shoulder to shoulder to resist a common danger, but we differ altogether as to past and future means of prevention and of cure (cheers). We, Liberal or Radical, are alike prepared, if the necessity arises, to put down rebellion (great cheers). But we do not quarrel with reform. The suppression of disorder is, as I think Mr. Pease told us, the first duty of government. I do not say that, but I say that it is an urgent and sacred duty, and I know no Liberal and no Radical who would venture to dispute that. It appears to me that there may be times when it is the highest duty of a Liberal to support and to assert the law (cheers); but, on the other hand, there is another duty which I regard as at least as urgent, as even more sacred, and that is to search out the cause of disorder, and where possible to remove it (applause). Now it is because the Government have performed this other, and in my opinion greater, duty that we find our quarrel just—that I am entitled to stand before you to-night to challenge your judgment, and hold myself permitted to defend the law which I and my colleagues have done our best to purge from oppression and from wrong (applause). Then, Mr. Chairman, you will see that in the judgment which you are called upon to give time is an essential element in the question. I have to show you, if I may, that we have acted neither too soon nor too late (cheers). If we have delayed too long, I admit we have made an error which may be fatal. If we have acted too soon, we have committed what I do no hesitate to say is a political crime (cheers). I think you will see that I endeavour to put before you a plain issue, and that I do not shirk the responsibility which rests upon every member of the Government, and upon everybody who pretends to sup-

port them (cheers). Now, in meeting charges which are made against us from opposite quarters I shall have to ask you to bear with me while I once more, for I know not how many times, go over the conditions of this hard problem with which we have to deal.

The Irish Problem.

It is not a new problem, this Irish question. Once in ten years, once in twenty years, it may be, sometimes with sufficient warning, sometimes without the slightest preparation, like a bolt from the blue sky, the Irish question is upon us (cheers). Every generation in turn for 400 years has had to deal with it. Each has disposed of it for a time according to its fashion, and each has had to bequeath it still unsettled to its successor. It is all very well for Lord Salisbury to pretend that the present situation is the fault of Mr. Gladstone or of Mr. Gladstone's Ministry (no, no). We know that for the whole time to which I have referred the Irish people have been constantly dissatisfied. There has not been, I am afraid, one single year during which the removal of the English garrison would not have been the signal for the instant uprising of the people and the declaration of their independence (hear, hear). Well, we have to keep our tempers (hear, hear). We have to guard against the natural impatience of this kind of thing. This is a dreary and a monotonous history. It is easy for us to say, at all events to the present generation, who know that our intentions are good, that we have done our best to repair the errors of the past; it is easy for us to say, "This Irish people is unreasonable; there is no possibility of satisfying it. Force and force alone is wha they understand." That, you know, is the high Tory doctrine (laughter); but does it commend itself to reasonable men? (No.) That is the contribution to the difficulties of the situation which the leaders of the Tory party make at the present moment. That is what Mr. James Lowther (cries of "oh") and the Duke of Marlborough say. They say repeal the Land Act of 1881, repeal the Land Act of 1870, and silence, if you cannot satisfy, Irish discontent. Well, I think the answer to such a statement as this is to be found in the fact that force has been tried during

all this period, and has failed (hear hear). Nothing is more certain than that force, although it may temporarily have produced order and tranquillity, has left Ireland always as discontented as before, has left the problem still unsolved. On the other hand, the idea of conciliation is so recent that Lord Salisbury is justified in considering it almost as a new invention of Mr. Gladstone's (laughter), and as the result of what, with characteristic feeling and good taste, he calls "the strain of pulpit eloquence in his disposition."

Much has been Done.

Well, I say, under these circumstances it is not fair to expect that the bitter memories of suffering and wrong which linger still in thousands of Irish cabins can be at once and entirely effaced by the tardy and incomplete reparation of these later years. But I say further, that I will not admit that the policy of conciliation has failed, or that the results of Liberal statesmanship have been such as to leave us entirely without hope. Catholic Emancipation, followed as it was by the Disestablishment of the Irish Church (cheers), has done much to soften, if it has not entirely obliterated, religious prejudices amongst the people, and has removed one cause, at all events, of disaffection and discontent. During these recent sad events, although there are, no doubt, many most remarkable exceptions, yet, speaking generally, I think we may say we have found the Catholic priesthood a moderating and not an exciting force (hear, hear). Then the Land Act of 1870 was a great attempt to deal with a still more important and still more deeply rooted grievance. No doubt it was imperfect and insufficient. It was marred partly by the action of the House of Lords (hear, hear); it was frustrated to some extent by the foolishness and short-sightedness of some of the landlords of Ireland: but still, such as it was—imperfect as it was—it has not been without its effect. This late outbreak of disaffection, serious, irritating, and distressing as undoubtedly it is, is, after all, nothing like so serious as those with which our ancestors had to deal. It will not compare for a moment with the times of the rebellion of 1798; it will not compare with the difficulty which existed at

the time of the tithe war in 1833. I doubt whether it is even as serious as the times of the Fenian outbreak during our own generation (hear, hear). The outrages which are reported fully in our press—sometimes I am afraid they are exaggerated in the press (hear, hear)—have filled us all with indignation and alarm; but, bad as they are, it is well to bear this in mind, that they are not one-tenth as great in number, or one-half as serious in character, as in many blacker times in Ireland (cheers). It is clear that the policy of conciliation cannot be said to have failed until all grievances have been redressed, and until the Irish people have felt the full advantage of the Union, which the sense of suffering and wrong has hitherto prevented them from feeling (cheers).

Much Remains to Do.

The majority of the farmers of Ireland and their families are at the mercy of the ten thousand landlords in the country, and they have suffered much in the past (cheers). Well, I have nothing to say, and will not say one single word, against the Irish landlords as a class. The proof that they have been on the whole just and even generous is to be found in the fact that they continue to exist (laughter). The occasional enforcement of their rights by an unjust and harsh landlord here and there was enough to cause alarm and indignation throughout the whole district, and was a constant and fruitful source of dis affection in the country; and when the bad times came—when famine stared these people in the face, and when to every man was brought the possibility of eviction and expatriation—I say it is no wonder that under such circumstances a common danger united the people, induced them to listen to baleful counsels, and occasionally impelled them to criminal deeds (cheers). Now, this was the time when—if I understand the speeches of Lord Salisbury aright—he would have applied coercion and would have suppressed the agitation. He would have had the Government deny the wrongs of the Irish people. He would have had them ignore their wants and silence their discontent. I can see that such a policy as this is perfectly consistent with the views of those who hold that force is a remedy for popular

discontent (cheers). But the Government did not so understand its duty. We thought it our business to search out the causes of the agitation—to find out what real grievance was at the bottom of all this discontent, and then to take the promptest steps in our power to completely remove it.

The Compensation for Disturbance Bill.

The case was urgent, as you know, and we introduced into Parliament what was known as the Compensation for Disturbance Bill. Now I have never doubted—and I do not doubt now—that if that Bill had been passed we should have taken from Mr. Parnell's hands the strongest instrument—the most powerful instrument—he has ever wielded (cheers). We should have convinced the Irish people not only of our good intentions, but of our ability to serve them and do them right, and the agitation would in all probability have speedily collapsed. But you know that Bill went to the place, the bourn (laughter) from which no Liberal Bill returns—at all events, in the same condition in which it went; and it was rejected by the imposing majority which the Tories can always command in that assembly whenever the rights of property have to be vindicated at the expense of other rights. From that moment Mr. Parnell had the game in his own hands. He was able to convince his fellow countrymen that they must look to agitation in order to secure attention to their grievances. Fear, and fear alone, he said, will move the House of Lords to pass a Land Bill; and when I read Lord Salisbury's speeches, when I see that he describes the Land Act of 1881 as an Act of plunder and confiscation, I confess I think Mr. Parnell had some ground for believing that he would have rejected this Bill by a majority at least as great as that with which he slew the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, if only his courage had equalled his inclinations (cheers).

A Justifiable Agitation.

Well now, I say, I say deliberately, that if this agitation had followed English precedents, if its leaders had kept it within the spirit as well as the letter of the law, if they had discountenanced violence and intimidation, that never was there an

agitation promoted in the United Kingdom more deserving of a nation's gratitude and more entitled to complete success (hear, hear).

BARBAROUS METHODS.

But unfortunately they did not stop there. If they did not countenance, at all events they permitted and excused, acts of outrage, a system of secret terrorism which no civilized Government could be expected to endure, and which would demoralize any people amidst whom it was permitted to exist. The avowed objects of the League—the examination into a system, the reform of an unjust law—they were objects perfectly legal; they were objects approved by the Government, which had pledged itself to effect them if they could. But the means by which these objects were sought to be advanced—cruelty to animals, arson, outrage, even assassination—those are not, in the opinion of any Liberal Ministry, permissible instruments for effecting political reform (cheers). Accordingly, in the early part of this year we found it necessary to apply to Parliament for further power. We hoped—and I am not ashamed of the hope—that the warning would be sufficient; we hoped that the possession of this extraordinary authority would render any exceptional use of it unnecessary (hear, hear). And you will remember how sparingly and how reluctantly the Bill was put into operation by Mr. Forster after he had long waited (cheers). Now we are told again, that at that time the Tories would have exhibited greater vigour (laughter), that they would have put those powers into operation to a much greater extent, that they would have done all that we have subsequently found ourselves called upon to do. I was myself invited, in a article which appears in the *Standard* this morning, to frankly admit that we made a mistake (laughter and cheers). I do not admit that we made a mistake; and if we had to do it over again, I would do the same (cheers).

THE OBJECTS OF THE LAND LEAGUE HAVE CHANGED.

Can any one doubt that between the time when the Tories say they would have suppressed the Land League and the time when we have suppressed it two great and important events

have happened? First, the League has changed its objects and extended and altered its programme (hear); and, secondly, the Land Act has been passed (prolonged cheering). I cannot understand how any one can deny the first of these propositions, except those who are blind or who wilfully ignore the facts. The common sense of the country, the public opinion of Europe and America,—as shown universally in the foreign press,—all confirm me when I say the objects of the Land League have developed and have altogether changed their character since the Land Act was passed (hear, hear). The original objects, as I have said, were legal, were even praiseworthy. To stifle the agitation at such a time would have been to have prevented reform, would have been also to have brought ruin to thousands and tens of thousands who are now protected by the Land Act (applause).

THE CONSTITUTION CANNOT BE LIGHTLY SUSPENDED.

Sir, it is no light thing at any time to suspend the Constitution; but to do so as these Tories would have us in order to silence the victims of injustice, in order to prevent the advocacy of necessary reforms—that, it seems to me, would be a monstrous tyranny which no free people ought to endure (cheers). Sir, there was yet another reason which weighed with the Government, and which, I think, might well affect the judgment of impartial men. If the agitation of the Land League had been then suppressed, the tenants of Ireland would have had no organization to fall back upon. They would have rested for redress of individual wrong upon themselves. They had no law to appeal to which was capable of protecting their rights and property. They would have been outside the law; and I think it probable that, as has happened in so many previous cases, they would have attempted to do justice to themselves by acts of secret violence, which would have taken the place of the open agitation which it is now represented that we ought to have suppressed. For these reasons, then, the Government applied for, and again and again declared in Parliament that they intended to use, these exceptional powers, not in order to suppress agitation, not in order to prevent discussion, but in

order to restrain the commission of actual outrage and to punish the instigators to intimidation. And in the meantime we pressed on the Land Bill with all the influence at our disposal, and we sacrificed to it the hopes of much-needed legislation for England and for Scotland.

The Land Act has become Law.

Well, at last the Land Bill has been passed (cheers). It is now the law (renewed cheers). It is to-day in actual operation. It may not be perfect. I am not here to say that experience may not show that it also in turn may be capable of and require amendment, but I say we have a right to demand that that experience should be given to us (hear, hear). We have a right to demand that the agitation, whose original demands have been fully satisfied by this great measure, by the confession of many of those who have taken part in it, should now be allowed to calm down, and the people of both countries should be permitted to reap the advantage of sacrifices which were intended to secure a kindlier feeling. Why is this natural expectation unfulfilled? I have spoken of the avowed objects of the Land League, but it is, of course, no secret that there have been in the minds of the leaders of this agitation other objects of a totally different character (hear, hear). So long as they pursued their avowed objects they were perfectly in the right. They attempted then to find out the nature of and to remove a great grievance.

The Secret Object of the League.

But the secret object was to inflame the grievance, and not to remove it (hear, hear). It was to use it as a basis for securing national independence (hear, hear). The success of the Land Bill, the pacification of Ireland,—those things would be defeated by the separatist policy which Mr. Parnell has supported, instigated by the American Irish, who have found the larger portion of the funds by which the agitation has been conducted (hear, hear); and, accordingly, after the Land Bill passed, the word went forth. The cry for fair rents had been conceded; it was abandoned, and the cry of no rent was substituted. First it was suggested—now it has been openly avowed. Every effort was

made to excite disaffection. English goods were to be boycotted throughout the length and breadth of Ireland. Hatred of England was inculcated as a patriotic duty. And these things were done deliberately and with intention, in order to make the government of Ireland by England an impossibility; not to improve the government, but to upset the government. Well, if these were merely extreme opinions, unsupported by overt acts, I do not know but what, at all events in ordinary times, a strong Government might tolerate, and treat them with contempt. But then we found all the machinery of intimidation once more being brought into play. We found that the Government was being ousted from its place in order to make way for the leaders of the Land League, whose dictates were subverting the law of the land.

LIBERTY, NOT LICENSE.

When it is said that it is contrary to Liberal principles to suspend the safeguards of liberty, I say that liberty is a mere phantom unless every man is free to pursue his inclinations, and to consult his interests within and under the protection of the law (applause); and when the League undertook in every case to supersede private judgment and to impose its dictates by force, terrorism, and intimidation, then it became a tyranny as obnoxious to Liberals and to Liberalism as any other form of despotism. It is quite possible that in the early days of the agitation there were some cases in which equally reprehensible practices had been indulged in. But that was exceptional—it was the work entirely of irresponsible persons, and which could not be traced directly to the action of that organization. Now all that has recently changed. What was formerly exceptional has become the rule; and in the meantime, with the new objects of the Land League, I do not think that Liberals any more than Tories can have any sympathy. It is one thing to sympathise with proposals for reforms of the law, but it is quite a different thing when those proposals become law to repudiate the obligations upon which the law is founded, and to promote agitation which plainly covers and includes revolutionary designs (hear). In such a case as this conciliation is at an end.

It is not a case of meeting just demands. Unless the Government of the country are prepared to accept the idea of the secession of Ireland from the Union (never), and a severance between the two countries, the time has come when the Government is bound to assert its authority (cheers). Now, is this question of separation one upon which there is any difference of opinion amongst us (no, and cheers)? I assume we are prepared now, as we have been all along, to consider impartially every Irish claim, to remedy every proved grievance (cheers); to endeavour to govern Ireland, not according to English prejudices, but according to the wishes of all that is most intelligent amongst the Irish people.

Is the Union a Grievance?

Are we ready to consider the Union itself as a standing grievance? and are we prepared to admit that the question of separation is an open one between us (never, and cheers)? Well, I say for myself that I am not prepared to admit that this is possible, either in the interest of this country or in the interest of Ireland,—that there should be created a hostile power within striking distance of these shores (cheers). I suppose that the first result of this would be that independent Ireland would be plunged into civil war, in which we would be forced to take a side (hear, hear). Ireland independent must always be jealous and afraid of England, which would be a strong military and commercial nation close to her (cheers). Ireland would be crushed under the weight of military and naval expenditure, which it would have to maintain in order to secure its separate existence. We should find our burdens enlarged in proportion. The two countries would be a standing menace one to the other; sooner or later the condition would be intolerable. We should have to commence the struggle anew, and Ireland would have to be reconquered, or England would be ruined (loud cheers).

The Union must be Preserved.

I am not prepared to face these contingencies; and therefore I say, Liberal and Radical as I profess myself to be (cheers), I say

to Ireland what the Liberals and the Republicans of the North said to the Southern States of America—"The Union must be preserved (cheers); you cannot and you shall not destroy it" (cheers). Within these limits there is nothing which you may not ask and hope to obtain—equal laws, equal justice, equal opportunities, equal prosperity (cheers). These shall be freely accorded to you, your wishes shall be our guide, your prejudices shall be by us respected, your interests shall be our interests; but nature and your position have forged indissoluble links, which cannot be sundered without being fraught with consequences of misery and ruin to both our countries, and we will use all the resources of the Empire to keep them intact (loud cheers).

REVOLUTION MUST BE SUPPRESSED.

But if this is our decision, the Government is bound to put down revolution, whether it takes the form of an uprising of men in arms, or whether it is veiled or cloaked in insidious disguise, and aims at destroying the Government by subverting law and by promoting social anarchy and disorganization (cheers). You know the spirit in which we have approached this task. Order must be maintained. Men with ulterior and dangerous designs must be restrained, must not be allowed to intercept the benefits of a measure they themselves, or many of them, have admitted to be just, and generous, and comprehensive in its character, and calculated to remove the evil of which they complain. But I should be false to all the traditions of Liberalism, I should be untrue to all that I hold to be noblest and best, if I did not say that this necessity imposed upon us is a hateful one, which I would have desired to have been spared (hear, hear). It is not a fact for insolent exultation. We have, I hope, finally got rid of and discredited jingoism in our foreign relations (cheers). We will not import it into our domestic policy. Coercion is a blot upon our civilization (hear, hear); it is a condemnation of our past government of Ireland. Is it not humiliating to us as Englishmen that here within a few hours' journey of where I am speaking such a meeting as this would be prevented by the police; that the chosen repre-

sentatives of the Irish people are imprisoned; that now, in the nineteenth century, after 400 years of the advantages of British rule, 50,000 soldiers and police are necessary in order to compel the Irish people to accept it? We, who have sympathised with other nationalities,—with Poland, with Hungary, with Italy, and with Greece,—we find ourselves obliged to employ some of the devices of despotism in order to prevent anarchy. Sir, I say the necessity exists, and it must be recognised.

The Necessity is Odious.

But it is an odious one, and one which I am only content to regard as a temporary expedient (loud cheers), and as affording an opportunity and a breathing space during which milder agencies may perform their healing work (hear). Well, there are two classes which are interested in the action of the Government. The larger by far includes all who believe that law and order are priceless benefits of civilization, and that they must be maintained. The other consists of those who are interested in the maintenance of a particular law, and who are willing that the whole resources of the State should be brought into play whenever its execution is in danger, and in order to prevent its reform (hear, hear). I submit to you that the course which the Government has pursued has amply vindicated the first of these interests. The second we do not undertake to defend, and hence the clamorous outcry of those who think that coercion has come too late because it did not come soon enough to prevent the passing of the Irish Land Act (cheers, and hear, hear).

No Conflict with the Irish People.

Sir, the future is still uncertain, but I think it is not without hope (hear, hear). Our contest is not yet—I hope it never may be—with the Irish people (hear, hear). I do not conceal from myself that the probability is that many of them sympathise with the views for which their leaders have been imprisoned; but there is a long distance between sympathy and putting sympathy into actual practice, and the prevalence of intimidation shows that sympathy alone was not a sufficient motive to

induce the majority of the Irish tenants to sacrifice the great advantages which we offer them in order to follow the dangerous counsels which some of their leaders have tendered (cheers). They have learnt now that this Government—only too happy to yield everything which justice can demand—will not be moved by threats to go one inch beyond (loud cheers). They will see the Ulster tenants crowd into the Land Courts to protect their property. They will have read the advice which has recently been given by Archbishop Croke and others (cheers), whose sympathy with the earlier stages of this agitation gives weight to their present statements; and I do not believe they will be found in the long run to reject the greatest boon which has ever been offered to a people in order to engage in a hopeless contest in which the teachings of morality, the dictates of common honesty, and all the forces of law and order will be against them (hear, hear). It is said that we have not earned the gratitude of the Irish people. I suppose that this generation must pass away, and the Land Act must work a silent revolution in the condition of the Irish people, before they will be able to recognise the sacrifices and the efforts of those who have striven to benefit them and to do something to retrieve the injustice and the oppression of the past (cheers). Not for this will we despair. We may take to heart the words of an American poet in the darker days of his country's history, and addressed to those who were strugglin for reforms which then seemed hopeless of accomplishment—

> "Yet do thy work; it shall succeed
> In thine or in another's day;
> And if denied the victor's meed,
> Ye shall not lack the toiler's pay."

(applause). The time will come when the unhappy passions which have been excited by these events will be forgotten, and when the slowly ripened harvest of justice and conciliation may be gathered in. It is now little more than a hundred years since the people of Scotland were as hotly opposed to English rule as the Irish people are at the present time (hear, hear). Now we are one nation, with no diversity of interest, and

animated by a common loyalty (cheers). What time and good government have done for Scotland time and good government will surely do for Ireland too (cheers). And meanwhile you may rest assured that we will not flinch in our determination to maintain the connection between the two countries, not for any selfish British interest, not to gratify imperial pride, but to increase the happiness and to secure the tranquillity of a united people. (Loud and prolonged cheers, during which the right hon. gentleman resumed his seat.)

WARRINGTON, Sept. 8th, 1885.

A FORECAST.

[The speech from which an extract is given below was the first of a series delivered in the autumn of 1885, in which Mr. Chamberlain advocated a scheme of Radical policy, which was afterwards known as the "Unauthorized Programme." In view of subsequent events Mr. Chamberlain's references to Irish affairs are of extreme significance, furnishing, as they do, the key to his action in the following year.]

I HAVE now to refer to another matter which affects more deeply the integrity of the Empire and the interests of the population than our relations with any foreign country. I refer to the relations which are in the future to subsist between Great Britain and Ireland. I suppose that Moderate Liberals, at least, have some opinion upon this matter; but upon it Lord Randolph Churchill, although he spoke for an hour and a half at Sheffield, was significantly silent. In view of the most important declaration which has ever been made by any Irish leader, Lord Randolph Churchill, the most influential member of the Tory Government, uttered not a word, gave not a sign, to show what was the opinion of the party which he has educated and which he has led in reference to the unhesitating and uncompromising demand which Mr. Parnell has made with regard to the separation of Ireland from the British Empire. I will say that the reticence of the noble lord is at least as eloquent as speech, and the Moderate Liberals must be blind indeed if they do not see in it the natural consequence of the Maamtrasna alliance, and of the tacit compact by which the Tories have become possessed of office. I am not going to imitate the reserve of the Tory Minister, because I consider the time has come when every man should speak out on this question. He owes it as much to the Irish people as to the English and the Scotch that there should be no ambiguity in his utterances on a matter which so vitally

affects the interests of the three countries. I think I may claim to be in some measure an impartial witness upon such a matter. I have tried to be a friend of Ireland; I have felt the deepest sympathy with the Irish people in their struggle against oppression and against unjust laws, in their impatience with a system of government which is alien to their national sentiment, and under which many of their best and ablest and most patriotic sons have been excluded from the practical work of administration in Ireland. Even in the speech to which I have been referring, I saw that Lord R. Churchill went out of his way to say that when Mr. Forster resigned—and it appears now that he approves of the administration of Mr. Forster—it was in consequence of a discreditable intrigue, which was principally the work of Mr. Chamberlain. Well, you know that there was no intrigue at all, and that Mr. Forster left office because he could not agree with the release of Mr. Parnell and his companions from Kilmainham, where they were confined without trial. I will say upon that, that subsequent events have amply justified the policy of the Government, to which I gave my hearty support and approval, but I only refer to it now because I think, in common with many other things, it shows that I have not been personally hostile to Mr. Parnell, nor a prejudiced opponent of the cause to which he has devoted his life.

Mr. Parnell's Programme.

Before I speak of the main points in his recent declaration, there is one matter upon which I think scant justice has hitherto been done him. On many previous occasions we have regretted that the Irish leader did not use the influence which he has deservedly acquired with his own people in order to repudiate and denounce the outrages which have disgraced and stained an agitation in many other respects worthy of admiration and sympathy. But when he spoke the other day at Dublin he used language which for firmness and evident conviction left nothing to be desired, and he showed the folly as well as the wickedness of the cowardly crimes which have done so much to prejudice the Irish cause in the eyes of all honourable and honest men. I am glad to acknowledge that it is a point of good augury,

now that a new struggle is beginning, that the Irish leader should have set his face so sternly against everything in the nature of riot and disorder. Now, what is Mr. Parnell's programme? He says that in his opinion the time has come to abandon altogether all attempts to obtain further remedial measures or subsidiary reforms, and to concentrate the efforts of the Irish representatives upon the securing of a separate and independent Parliament, which is to consist of a single Chamber, and whose first object it will be to put a protective duty against all English manufactures. Then he says, in the second place, that he expects Whig and Tory will vie with one another in helping him to a settlement on his own terms; and he says, in the last place, that if any party seeks to make this object impossible, he and his friends will make all things impossible for them. Well, gentlemen, I am not a Whig, and I am certainly not a Tory. But, speaking for myself, I say that if these, and these alone, are the terms on which Mr. Parnell's support is to be obtained, I will not enter into competition for it. This new programme of Mr. Parnell's involves a great extension of anything that we have hitherto understood by "Home Rule." The powers he claims for his separate Parliament are altogether beyond anything which exists in the case of the State Legislatures of the American Union, which has hitherto been the type and model of the Irish demands; and if this claim were conceded, we might as well for ever abandon all hope of maintaining a United Kingdom. We should establish within less than thirty miles of our shores a new foreign country, animated from the outset with unfriendly intentions towards ourselves A policy like that I firmly believe would be disastrous and ruinous to Ireland herself. It would be dangerous to the security of this country, and under these circumstances I hold that we are bound to take every step in our power to avert so great a calamity. We will appeal in the first place to the Irish people. I cannot bring myself to believe that they are so prejudiced by the recollection of past wrongs that they will not recognise the anxiety of the present generation of Englishmen to do them justice, to remove every tangible grievance, and establish equa laws between the three kingdoms; and I think if they are per-

suaded of this they will be unwilling to sever themselves from the common history of the United Kingdom, in which Irishmen have taken so great and glorious a part. I won't dwell upon the threats with which Mr. Parnell has accompanied his demand. I suppose they were intended for Irish consumption; but I think they were unnecessary and uncalled for. Mr. Parnell seems to me to forget the change which has come over our constitutional system. He is no longer dealing with interests and classes, represented in the British House of Commons altogether out of proportion to their number, but he is face to face with the whole population of England and Scotland, reinforced, as it will be, at least by one-fifth of the population of Ireland itself; and to threaten thirty-two millions of people with the vengeance of four millions is a rhetorical artifice which is altogether unworthy of Mr. Parnell's power and influence. But it is said by him that justice requires we should concede to Irishmen the absolute right of self-government. I would reply that it is a right which must be considered in relation to the security and welfare of the other countries in juxtaposition to which Ireland is placed, and with whose interests hers are indissolubly linked. I cannot admit that five millions of Irishmen have any greater inherent right to govern themselves without regard to the rest of the United Kingdom than the five million inhabitants of the metropolis. God has made us neighbours, and I would to heaven that our rulers had made us friends. But as neighbours neither one nor the other has any right so to rule his own household as to be a source of annoyance or danger to the other. Subject to that limitation, I, for my part, would concede the greatest possible measure of local government to the Irish people, as I would concede it also to the English and the Scotch.

Mr. Parnell's Terms Raised.

Some time ago—more than twelve months since—I prepared a scheme with this object, which, in addition to providing for a popular representative authority in every district throughout the three kingdoms, charged with the important duty of dealing with exclusively local work, proposed also the establishment of a national elective council, to which might be referred the

administration, supervision, and control exercised by some of the departments in London, and by those departments in Ireland which are commonly known under the name of Dublin Castle. I proposed to sweep away all the network of boards appointed by the English Government, carrying with them the seal of English authority, whose interference has produced so much irritation, so much just annoyance and even injury, in Ireland. I had reason to believe at the time that some such scheme would have been welcomed by the great bulk of the Irish people. I had reason to know that it would be accepted by the leaders of the National party and by the chief representatives of public opinion in Ireland, and that it would have been regarded by the people as a full and satisfactory settlement of the question of local government. No doubt there would have remained the national sentiment in favour of the establishment of a separate Legislature, but if such councils as I had suggested had been established and put in full working order, if the perpetual interference of foreign authorities had been abolished, I believe that the old sense of grievance would have gradually died out, and that a new generation would have arisen that would have been glad and willing to accept the obligation as well as the advantage which the union of the three kingdoms for Imperial interests is calculated to secure. My proposals, unfortunately, did not meet with the support of the Moderate Liberals, and under those circumstances it would have been useless to proceed with them. What has happened? The opportunity has passed away. Mr. Parnell, encouraged by the Tory surrender, has raised his terms, and the National leaders have abandoned, at all events for the time, all care for local government, properly so called, in the expectation that one or other of the great parties, either from fear or from interest, will concede their demand for a national and separate Legislature.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, April 9th, 1886.

MR. GLADSTONE'S HOME RULE BILL.

[The Bill for the better government of Ireland was introduced by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on April 8th. On the following day Mr. Chamberlain rose to make the customary statement of his reasons for resigning his office.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: In interposing at this stage of the debate I have to throw myself upon the indulgence of the House. I have risen not so much for the purpose of entering upon any detailed discussion of the magnificent speech which was delivered by my right hon. friend the Prime Minister last night, as to make an explanation to the House of the causes which led to my recent resignation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

I believe that it is the invariable practice of Ministers retiring from a Cabinet to seek the earliest opportunity of explaining their position to the House, and if in my case this explanation has necessarily been delayed, that is owing to circumstances which the House will thoroughly appreciate (hear, hear). I could not, of course, without impropriety—it would have been indecent for me to have done anything to anticipate the explanation of my right hon. friend, or to force his hand, and accordingly, it is only now that I have the permission of Her Majesty to state publicly the circumstances and the reasons which have led to the course I have taken. If in doing this I have to digress a little from the strict course of the debate, I hope that the House will be willing to make allowances for the peculiar circumstances in which I stand (cheers). It is now nearly a month since my right hon. friend the member

for the Border Burghs and myself tendered our resignations, and it is nearly a fortnight since they were finally accepted. In the interval, and while our mouths were closed, rumour has been busy with our reputations and motives, and rumour has not always been very truthful, and certainly it has not been very friendly. I find that some persons, whose frame of mind it is very difficult for me to appreciate, seem to take a pleasure in imputing the basest motives for the public actions of men with whom they happen to differ, and suggest that I only joined the Government with a preconceived determination to leave it at the first opportunity. The statement is not only untrue, but it is ridiculous (Mr. Gladstone.—"Hear, hear"). I will say to the House that no act of my public life has been so painful as the resignation which I recently tendered to my right hon. friend. I am told that by taking that step I have wrecked my political prospects, and destroyed altogether all hope of future usefulness. That is a prospect which it is possible for me to contemplate with equanimity; but it is more difficult to reconcile myself to a separation from one whom I have followed and honoured for so many years, and to leave the personal friends and political associates with whom, I believe, I have no other cause of difference whatever. I have found it hard to give up an opportunity which I thought I had in my grasp to do something to put forward legislation, in which I take a great and overwhelming interest. These considerations weighed with me, and I can assure the House that I have found it a more difficult task to leave a Government than to enter one. There is only one other remark which I wish to make by way of preface. I admit that if any difference of opinion has arisen between myself and my right hon. friend, with his unrivalled experience, with his vast knowledge of public affairs, and with his long and tried devotion to the public service, the natural presumption is, that he is right and that I am wrong. It is a presumption to which I have yielded my own judgment on many occasions, but in the present instance the issue before us is one of such vital importance (Opposition cheers), and a mistake, if we make one, is so fatal and so irrevocable, that it seems to me to be the duty of every man, however humble, to bring an

independent judgment to its consideration; and everything, private feeling, personal friendship, political ambition, and the cherished objects of a public life—all these must be put aside in view of circumstances which are still higher and still more important (cheers). Since I have been in public affairs I have called myself, I think not altogether without reason, a Radical (hear, hear). But that title has never prevented me from giving great consideration to Imperial interests. I have cared for the honour, and the influence, and the integrity of the Empire (Opposition cheers), and it is because I believe these things are now in danger that I have felt myself called upon to make the greatest sacrifice that any public man can make. It will be in the recollection of the House that the late Government were defeated on the 26th of January, on a motion which was made by my friend Mr. Jesse Collings, and which raised what has sometimes been called the unauthorized programme, although I never admitted the justice of that description. But it will be admitted that by that resolution the House did undoubtedly pledge itself generally to the policy with which I was conspicuously identified during the autumn campaign; and when my right hon. friend, on the 30th of January, did me the honour to invite me to become a member of the Government, I was able to tell him that I would allow no personal considerations whatever to stand in the way of my giving him any support I could possibly bring to him; but I felt it necessary to add that the reports that were current as to his intentions with regard to Ireland made me somewhat doubtful whether I could possibly be of service. My right hon. friend was good enough to tell me that he had not up to that day formed any definite plan; that he had only committed himself to inquiry, and that if I joined him I should be perfectly free to judge and to decide upon anything which would be submitted to the Cabinet. My right hon. friend said that he adhered to his previous public utterances, and all he asked his colleagues was to join with him in an inquiry and examination as to how far it was or was not practicable to meet the wishes of the great proportion of the Irish people, as expressed by the return of a large majority of representatives to Parliament, to form something in the nature

of a legislative body sitting in Dublin. He added that any possible concession in this direction would be accompanied by full and ample guarantees for the security and integrity of the Empire, for the protection of minorities of all classes of the community (Home Rule cheers), and for the protection of the just interests of the three kingdoms. I told my right hon. friend that this was an inquiry of which I approved, and which, indeed, I thought had become indispensable. I told him that I thought the conditions which he had affixed to any possible concession were just, reasonable, and adequate conditions; but I went on to say that I thought it was honest to state that, as far as I was able to make up my mind, or to form any kind of judgment, I did not believe that he would find it possible to conciliate these conditions and limitations with the establishment of a separate and practically independent Parliament in Dublin. My right hon. friend did not think that opinion so expressed by me ought to be a bar to my joining his Government. I asked his leave to put my views in writing, and, if the House will permit me, I will read the letter in which I accepted office:

"40, PRINCE'S GARDENS, S.W., *Jan. 30th*, 1886.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—I have availed myself of the opportunity you have kindly afforded me to consider further your offer of a seat in your Government. I recognise the justice of your view that the question of Ireland is paramount to all others, and must first engage your attention. The statement of your intention to examine whether it is practicable to comply with the wishes of the majority of the Irish people, as testified by the return of 85 representatives of the Nationalist party, does not go beyond your previous public declarations, while the conditions which you attach to the possibility of such compliance seem to me adequate, and are also in accordance with your repeated public utterances. But I have already thought it due to you to say that, according to my present judgment, it will not be found possible to conciliate these conditions with the establishment of a national legislative body sitting in Dublin; and I have explained my own preference for an attempt to come to terms with the Irish members on the basis of a more limited scheme of local government, coupled with proposals for a settlement of the land and perhaps also of the education question,

You have been kind enough, after hearing these opinions, to repeat your request that I should join your Government, and you have explained that, in this case, I shall retain 'unlimited liberty of judgment and rejection' on any scheme that may ultimately be proposed, and that the full consideration of such minor proposals as I have referred to as an alternative to any larger arrangement will not be excluded by you. On the other hand, I have no difficulty in assuring you of my readiness to give an unprejudiced examination to any more extensive proposals that may be made, with an anxious desire that the results may be more favourable than I am at present able to anticipate. In the circumstances, and with the most earnest hope that I may be able in any way to assist you in your difficult work, I beg to accept the offer you have made—to submit my name to Her Majesty for a post in the new Government.

"I am, my dear Mr. Gladstone, yours sincerely,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN."

"I HAVE NEVER BEEN OPPOSED TO HOME RULE."

I have been blamed, like my right hon. friend the member for the Border Burghs, for joining the Government at all. I think a moment's reflection will show, at all events, that any accusation of this kind based upon my action would be entirely unreasonable (Mr. Gladstone: "Hear, hear," and cheers). I have never been opposed to Home Rule, as I have explained, and as I have always understood the words, and as my right hon. friend has on many public occasions defined it. The definitions of my right hon. friend, those which I have accepted, are these: that he has been willing—as I have been willing—to give to Ireland the largest possible extension of local government consistent with the integrity of the Empire and the supremacy of Parliament (Opposition cheers); and, further, my right hon. friend has always declared he would never offer to Ireland anything in the direction of Home Rule which he was not prepared to offer with an equal hand to Scotland and other parts of the United Kingdom. If now, Sir, to my deep regret and with the greatest possible reluctance, I have felt compelled to sever myself from the Government of my right hon. friend, it is because in my heart and conscience I do not think the scheme which he explained to the House last night does

maintain the limitations which he has always declared himself determined to preserve (Opposition cheers). I confess, if I had refused at this time to join the Government to undertake an inquiry so limited, and under these conditions, then I think there would have been some reason to say that I was animated by a disloyal feeling towards my leader, or that I was careless of the interests of the party with which I am connected. Now, Sir, I admit that in all probability the misunderstanding was entirely my own fault. I certainly assumed that the inquiry my right hon. friend spoke of would be undertaken by him in concert with his colleagues (Opposition laughter). I imagined that it was intended to proceed with the examination step by step in the Cabinet, and that after full consultation we were all to be called upon to endeavour to build up some scheme which would fulfil the intentions of the Prime Minister.

A Startling Proposal.

But, as I say, I must have misunderstood my right hon. friend in this particular, because it was not until the 13th of March that this matter was mentioned for the first time in the Cabinet. It was then brought forward in connection with the scheme for land purchase, which had been circulated to members of the Cabinet the day before. The scheme contained in this paper was certainly to me a very startling proposal, involving the issue of £120,000,000 consols——

Mr. Gladstone: I must interrupt my right hon. friend. I beg to observe that the permission which I obtained from Her Majesty on his behalf had no relation whatever to any particulars of any scheme with regard to the sale or purchase of land to be submitted to the House of Commons (cheers). I did not ask Her Majesty for any permission for any one to speak upon a subject on which a final decision of the Cabinet had not been taken, and which had not been publicly explained to Parliament (hear, hear). I may add that any attempt, or any partial attempt, to enter upon supposed particulars of that scheme would lead to radical misunderstanding (loud Ministerial cheers).

Mr. Chamberlain: I cannot say how much I regret the mis-

understanding which has arisen between my right hon. friend and myself. I need not say to the House that if I had had the slightest conception that my right hon. friend had intended to limit in the way he now says my explanation to the House, either I would have withheld that explanation altogether until a more fitting opportunity, or that at least I would not in the slightest degree have gone from any arrangement that had been come to (cheers). I am very sorry that I have not with me my correspondence with my right hon. friend upon this particular point. If it be desirable, at another time I will produce it to the House (cheers). What I have to say now is this—that I asked my right hon. friend to obtain for me permission from Her Majesty to explain the causes which had led to my resignation. Why, Sir, I did not resign upon the scheme of Home Rule alone. I tendered my resignation after this scheme of land purchase had been produced, and in consequence of the production of that scheme of land purchase. How can I explain the reason of my resignation to the House if my hands are tied behind me? (cheers.) But, Sir, I go further than that. My right hon. friend, in reply to my request that I might have permission to explain the cause of my resignation, wrote to me a letter to the effect that he had obtained the permission of Her Majesty that I might state the reasons—I forget the exact words, but I think he will agree that I am giving the sense—which had led to my resignation "in connection with the scheme for the government of Ireland" ("hear, hear," from Mr. Gladstone). I thought that that was a doubtful expression—I was afraid that it might mean some kind of limitation (laughter). What did I do? I wrote to my right hon. friend to state to him that I proposed to read to the House of Commons a letter I had written after the Cabinet meeting at which the land scheme was discussed, and in which I stated my reasons for objecting to the land scheme, and my right hon. friend gave me his permission, and said, "By all means" (cheers).

MR. GLADSTONE: Mr. Speaker, from my right hon. friend I understood that he, having in his hands the note which I had written to him as to the permission I had obtained from Her Majesty, proposed to read all the letters which he had written

in relation to the subject matter of that note. I replied to my right hon. friend that in my opinion he was perfectly justified in exercising his own discretion upon that subject. That is perfectly true, and I do not think anything beyond that would be found to have been included in the scope of the note from me to which my right hon. friend has referred, but which unfortunately he has not got with him (laughter and cheers).

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: Sir, I certainly have not got the correspondence in my possession, but I could not have conceived that this most painful difference of opinion could possibly have arisen. I am sorry to differ from my right hon. friend. I think his view is mistaken. What I ask his permission to read—I am sure he will find it in my letter—was my letter of March 15th, 1886. His permission to me is to read that letter. I beg to ask my right hon. friend whether he wishes to withdraw that permission now.

MR. GLADSTONE: I cannot at this moment recollect what letter it was (laughter and cheers) which my right hon. friend wrote to me on the 15th of March. I have stated, I think, with perfect exactitude the substance of my statement to him.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: I must say my right hon. friend puts me in a most difficult position. I have to decide at a moment's notice, with the greatest respect for my right hon. friend, what course I shall pursue (a voice: "Read"). I have again to repeat that in the letter which I wrote to my right hon. friend, I gave him the dates of all the letters and documents which I proposed to read. I proposed also to read certain letters of his, and I asked whether he had any objection to my reading them. In his reply he said he thought it was unnecessary and undesirable, and he also objected to my reading another document which I had mentioned. I replied to him that I should certainly be guided by his wishes (hear, hear), and I should content myself with reading my own letters, and should not read anything I received from him. My right hon. friend says he is not aware of the contents of one of those letters, the most important, the one I described to him in my letters as dated March 15th, and as containing my reasons for

my resignation. He says he is not aware of the contents of that letter. I cannot say whether my right hon. friend thinks I am entitled to read it or not (Opposition laughter). If my right hon. friend cannot give me permission to read that letter I shall not press it.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have stated the full extent of the permission received from Her Majesty by me on behalf of my right hon. friend. It is not in my power to extend that permission, and I think it would be entirely contrary alike to principle and precedent that explanations should be entered into upon this occasion referring to a measure of very great importance about to be introduced to this House by me, but the introduction of which has not been moved.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: I shall endeavour, Sir, to guide myself by the wishes of my right hon. friend (cheers). But the House will see that in the circumstances the explanation which I had proposed to offer them must be altogether lame and incomplete (hear, hear). It is impossible that I should ever at any future time, any more than now, justify myself completely to the country or to the House of Commons (cheers). I cannot do so when my right hon. friend introduces his Land Bill, because he will tell me then that it is not competent for me to speak on his Home Rule scheme (oh, oh).

MR. GLADSTONE: No, no.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: Well, it does not rest entirely with my right hon. friend, and if he makes no objection the Speaker will call me to order, and it will be impossible for me in discussing the land purchase scheme except by consent of the House (cheers) to deal with the question of Home Rule. I was only anxious to refer to the scheme for land purchase—I was not going elaborately into details, but dealing only with general principles—so far as was absolutely necessary to show to the House what was the nature of my opposition to the combined scheme of my right hon. friend. I will endeavour to continue what explanation it may still be possible for me to make with regard to that portion of my objection to the policy of my right hon. friend which refers to his proposals for dealing with the government of Ireland (hear, hear).

RESIGNATION TENDERED.

I understood from my right hon. friend on the day of which I am speaking that he intended to propose to Parliament the establishment of a Parliament in Dublin with very large powers, and he gave some explanation also of the fiscal relations which would obtain between this Parliament and the English Parliament. It was after this Cabinet meeting as I have said—it was held on the 13th—that on the 15th I wrote to my right hon. friend the letter which I had intended to read to the House, and which contained the reasons why I objected to any considerable employment of English credit for the purpose of buying out the Irish landlords, and also why I thought the new authority was one which it would be unwise and inexpedient to trust with the possession of the land so bought, with the collection of the rents, and with the payment to this country of the necessary interest and sinking fund (cheers). My right hon. friend, in reply to that letter, told me, without entering into any argument, that he thought my resignation was premature, and that it would be right that I should at all events postpone it until he had been able to complete his scheme for local government in Ireland, and had submitted it to the Cabinet. In accordance with this request therefore I postponed my resignation until he should be in a position to make his statement, which was on the 26th March, the next time the Cabinet met. Well, I gathered at that time that as regards the land proposals they were practically and in principle unaltered. But that is a matter on which I do not wish to insist, as I am unable to tell the House what they were originally (Opposition laughter). It is not really of the slightest consequence whether they were altered or not; but I was going on to say that my right hon. friend stated at this meeting the general heads of the scheme for the government of Ireland which he expounded so eloquently last night.

FOUR OBJECTIONS TO THE HOME RULE BILL.

I took four principal objections to this proposal. I objected to it in the first instance because it proposed to terminate the representation of the Irish members at Westminster (cheers).

I objected to that because of the consequences which follow upon it (Opposition cheers). It appeared to me that if the Irish members were to cease to occupy their seats in this House, the Irish Parliament to which they are to be relegated must be, ought to be, and would be, in the future if not in the present, co-ordinate and of equal authority (Opposition cheers). Then I objected, in the second place, to the proposal which at this time my right hon. friend made, to renounce all the exercise of the right of Imperial taxation in Ireland, including, of course, customs and excise. I objected, in the third place, to the surrender of the appointment of the judges and of the magistrates (Opposition cheers). And I objected, in the last place, to the principle under which my right hon. friend proposed to make the new authority supreme in all matters which were not specially excluded from its competence; whereas I thought the right principle in any such proposal would be to confer upon it authority only in those cases in which the authority was specially and by statute delegated (hear, hear). In these circumstances I again tendered my resignation, and it was accepted the next day.

Important Changes.

Now the House will see that since I left the Cabinet there has been one very important change in the proposals. The customs and the excise are now to be collected and levied by an Imperial authority. Well, Sir, I ought to be pleased; but I confess I am doubtful (laughter). I am very glad, of course, that the arguments which I used in the Cabinet had much greater force after I left than they had while I remained (laughter). At the same time, however, the concession does not appear to me to have gone far enough. I connected the collection of customs and excise with the continued presence of Irish members in this House; and under the system proposed by my right hon. friend now you have an anomaly which I cannot help thinking the Irish members themselves must feel intolerable and degrading (loud cries of "no, no" from the Home Rulers). They are the sole judges in such a matter (loud Home Rule cheers). I think the hon. members are

cheering me a little too soon. I believe they are the sole judges as to their own sentiments (hear, hear), and not of course of what this Imperial Parliament should do (cheers). Well, all I can say is, that the new proposal seems to me to be inconsistent with what I understood my right hon. friend laid down as a cardinal principle of our English constitution—namely, that taxation and representation should go together (Opposition cheers). Hon. members opposite seem inclined at the present moment to accept this arrangement—so I judge from their cheers; but all I can say is, that the hon. member for Cork has again and again, in his public speeches, stated, in the most emphatic way, that he would not be satisfied with any Parliament which did not leave the customs and the excise, and the right, if necessary, to put a protective duty on Irish industries with the Irish authorities.

MR. PARNELL: I have said frequently that I should claim that right for the Irish people; but the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister has certainly in his speech yesterday been enabled to show us that we are getting a very good *quid pro quo* in exchange for giving up this right of collecting the customs, in the shape of £1,400,000 a year (laughter).

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: Yes, I was coming to that later on (laughter), when I have to consider the price which is being paid for the scheme of Home Rule which is submitted to our consideration (Opposition cheers). I notice in the scheme as announced to the House last night several other—I will not call them changes, but developments of the scheme with which I was not previously acquainted. For instance, I find that from the Irish Parliament are to be excluded such matters as copyright, matters connected with the currency, coining, probably the Post Office, and then comes the very large question of trade and navigation (hear, hear). I am very anxious to know, and I hope some member of the Government will explain, exactly what is meant by trade and navigation. Of course, I assume that the Irish authorities in these circumstance will not be enabled to give a bounty for the encouragement of any local industry. I assume, I do not know whether I am right, that such a question as patents will be altogether

excluded from their competence. I assume that such a question as bankruptcy would also be excluded from their competence. These are matters which require explanation, and what I wish to say at this moment is, that if all these things are to be taken out of the Irish Parliament, and are to be dealt with by the English Parliament, in which the Irish have no representation at all, I cannot help thinking that they would have a very real and considerable grievance. I think the commercial classes of Ireland, for instance, will complain about the question of bankruptcy. At the present time Ireland and Scotland both have separate bankruptcy laws from the bankruptcy laws of England. How on earth will the Irish be satisfied to have their commercial law, which is to suit their particular idiosyncrasies and requirements, dictated to them at Westminster, when they have not one single representative to express their views in the House of Commons? (hear, hear.)

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: It will not include bankruptcy.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: Then I do not know what you mean by trade (laughter).

THE MAXIMUM OF RISK AND THE MINIMUM OF ADVANTAGE.

I hope I am not going beyond the limitation which has been imposed on me when I say briefly my objection is not to one portion of the scheme, but to the scheme as a whole (Opposition cheers). I object to either part of the scheme. I object —I will not say to the proposal of my right hon. friend, because I do not know what it is—I shall not know until he has explained it in the final form which it has received; but I know this, that, whatever it is, I shall object if it lays —— (ironical Home Rule cheers). I must say that the zeal of hon. members opposite overleaps itself (laughter). I am not hostile to the scheme of land purchase. It would not be right of me to state my views on that subject; but I will say at once that I am prepared for a scheme of land purchase. What I was going to say when I was interrupted was that I should object to any scheme which laid on the British taxpayer

a tremendous liability, and what I thought to be an excessive risk (hear, hear). Above all, I should object to any scheme that was intended only as a bribe to Irish landlords to induce them to modify their hostility to a scheme of Home Rule (hear, hear), and which did not give evidence of a substantial and considerable advantage for Irish tenants, who are a class, the poorer tenants especially, deserving of sympathy and assistance. Then I objected to the new authority proposed to be created, because it was certain to become practically independent. The scheme was one for separation, and not for Home Rule. I objected to the two together, because they seemed to me to combine the *maximum* of risk and the *minimum* of advantage (cries of "no"), and the utmost possible sacrifice for an object which I did not believe it to be worth our while to strive to attain (cheers)—I do not wish to be misunderstood—the object of course being the creation of a separate statutory Parliament in Dublin. I wanted to have said something more about the land, but I pass over that. Only I will say this—a perfectly general remark also, and applying almost to any scheme of land purchase—that we shall be asked to consider any scheme of land purchase as an inseparable adjunct to a scheme which, in my opinion, practically will place Ireland in the position of Canada. Now I want to test that illustration of Canada. Canada is loyal and friendly to this country (hear, hear). Ireland, I am sorry to say, at the present time is not loyal and cannot be called friendly (cheers). But if Canada came to this House, and asked for any large use of British credit in order to buy Canadian land, or to carry out public works in Canada, why it would be scouted from one end of the kingdom to the other (hear, hear). Well, then, how can it possibly be right for us to give to Ireland what we refuse to Canada, when the sole result of the scheme, after all, is that we are going to try and put Ireland in the position in which Canada has been for many years? (hear, hear.) I said I shall object to any scheme that involves the British taxpayer in excessive risks. Why is the risk of any scheme excessive? I have been myself an advocate of large schemes in England and Scotland intended, by the use of public money, to turn a small tenant into the

proprietor of the land that he tilled. I have not been unwilling to take the risk in such a case. But what I object to is to take a risk for what I believe in a short time will be a foreign country (cheers). For an integral part of the United Kingdom I am prepared to take a risk; I am not prepared to take a risk in order to promote what is in my judgment a thinly veiled scheme of separation (cheers).

The Key of the Situation.

The fact is, that the key to the whole situation is the proposal to exclude Irish members from this House. I do not wonder that that is a proposal which has many attractions (laughter), both for Liberal and for Conservative members. The hon. member for Cork has often shown that he can be in this House a most agreeable colleague; but I am sure he will not think me offensive if I say that he and his friends have also shown that they can be very disagreeable at times (a laugh). He in one of his speeches threatened that, if his demands were not complied with, he would make all legislation impossible.

Mr. Parnell: I never threatened anything of the kind.

Mr. Chamberlain: I am most glad to accept the denial of the hon. member, but I can show him the paper in which the words appeared. No doubt the report is inaccurate.

Mr. Parnell: Perhaps the right hon. gentleman will read the passage.

Mr. Chamberlain: I have not got it with me, but I will send to the hon. member, if he likes (hear, hear), the passage, the date, and the place where the speech is alleged to have been made. But I do not want to press that, and I readily accept his statement that he never said so. However, whether he said it or not, there are many people who think he would have the power to do something of that kind, and that fact weighs very much with English and Scotch members in the desire that they, at all events, should be left alone to carry on English and Scotch business without Irish assistance (laughter). I sympathise with that feeling; but I want to point out to the House that you must take the consequence of that. It is quite unreasonable to turn out Irish members from this

House, and leave them entirely unrepresented in reference to matters in which Irish interests are largely concerned, and which are dealt with by the Imperial Parliament. Just consider it. Already under the scheme of the Prime Minister the customs and the excise are to be taken from their control; all the prerogatives of the Crown are to be removed from their competence to deal with, as are also the army and the navy, and foreign and colonial policy (hear, hear). Are the Irish members of opinion that the Irish people would be permanently content to be shut out from all part in the Imperial policy of this country? I was going to quote the hon. member for Cork again, but also from memory. He will tell me if I am wrong. I think that in one of his speeches he said something to the effect that he would never be satisfied until Ireland took her full place among the nations of the world (hear, hear). That is, I think, a patriotic aspiration, but I would point out that it never can be realized under the scheme of my right hon. friend. How can Ireland take her place among the nations of the world when her mouth is closed on every international question? Ireland is to have no part in the arrangement of commercial treaties by which her interests may be seriously affected. She will have no part in deciding the policy under which war may break out, in which her sentiment may be strongly engaged on one side or the other, or which may put in serious peril her own coast and her own people. She is to have no part in the control of the army and navy of this country. That is extraordinary, because the annals of our army show that there have been no more illustrious members of that army than Irishmen; and Irishmen under this scheme are to be content to be sent to battle and to death for matters which Irish representatives are to have no voice in discussing or determining. I say that Ireland under these circumstances is asked to occupy a position of degradation, and I venture to predict that, whatever hon. members may now do in order to obtain this instalment of their demands, their own countrymen will never rest satisfied with such an inadequate concession (cheers). Again, Ireland is to pay a fixed contribution to the army and navy in which she is to have no part, but that contribution is not to be increased

if England gets into difficulty or into war. It may be that in the most terrible crisis of the fate of the Empire, Ireland is expected to be indifferent and unaffected, contributing not one single penny in order to secure the safety of the realm of which she is supposed to form a part! Where, in all this, is the integrity of the Empire? (Opposition cheers.)

A Sketch of an Irish Budget.

There is another point that I had almost omitted, but which I think will be interesting to hon. members opposite. My right hon. friend raised a smile when he imagined himself in the position of an Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer proposing an Irish Budget; and certainly I think that my right hon. friend would never have a more difficult task to perform than if he had to propose and recommend the first Budget presented to the new Irish Parliament (a laugh). I do not wonder that the hon. member for Cork complained from his point of view of this part of the scheme. I do not wonder that he asks the Prime Minister to be more liberal to him, and tells him that unless he is more liberal the cheerful acceptance of his scheme which he has asked for and made a condition in putting it forward will be denied to him. I say he has good reason to be alarmed. But before I consider the position of the Irish taxpayer I wish to consider the position of the English taxpayer. In this scheme we shall have given independence. We shall continue to burden our own taxpayer with a large contribution in aid of the Irish Government. In the first place, the contribution which Ireland now makes towards the Imperial expenditure is to be reduced from one in $12\frac{1}{2}$ to one in 15. I think that my right hon. friend has changed the estimate since I was in the Cabinet. No doubt he had good reasons for it. But I want to point out that in any case the result is that the difference must be made up by imposing increased taxation on the British taxpayer. Then you have to face this, that if Ireland's contribution is reduced from one in $12\frac{1}{2}$ to one in 15, whatever balance is required must come out of additional taxation. But that is not all. We are to continue, as I understand, to pay a contribution of half a million a year for the Irish constabulary. The hon.

member for Cork says that that is not enough, and that it ought to be much more. Then, if I followed my right hon. friend correctly, we are also indirectly, in connection with the customs and excise, to pay to Ireland that nice little sum of £1,400,000, which has reconciled the hon. member for Cork to the exclusion of the customs and excise from the work of the Irish Parliament. But will this privilege of levying customs and excise in Ireland reconcile the English taxpayer to finding this further sum of £1,400,000? We have also to find £500,000 for the constabulary, and that makes a charge of £1,900,000 a year, which, capitalized, amounts to £62,700,000; and this is a sum which we are asked to offer to Ireland together with this scheme of local government. But some will also object to this proposal on behalf of the Irish taxpayer, because it is the peculiarity of this scheme that it will be bad for both parties (hear, hear). The Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer will have to tell the Irish House of Commons that he has to appropriate £3,250,000 annually as the fixed quota of Ireland towards the payment of a debt, any obligation in regard to which Ireland has never recognised, and for the army and navy, in the control of which Ireland will have no part (hear, hear). He will have to make this statement year by year, and sooner or later his constituents will lead him a very evil life (laughter). But that is not all. It is said that the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer will, according to the scheme of my right hon. friend, have an annual surplus of £400,000, but I would like to point out on what very slight foundations it rests. So far as the expenditure goes, as set forth in the Budget which my right hon. friend laid before us last night, there is nothing to object to (cheers). But as regards the revenue, the hon. member for Cork has already pointed out that £6,000,000 out of the £8,000,000 depend on the excise and customs, and that a very large part of the £6,000,000 is raised from duty on spirits and tobacco. If, therefore, there be any reduction in the consumption, either in England or Ireland, of spirits, it will be followed at once by a large reduction in the receipts of the Irish Exchequer (hear, hear). But that is not all. I am told—I do not know whether hon. members opposite will agree

to it—that to some extent the trade of Ireland in spirits and porter is threatened by competition from Scotland and elsewhere. Any loss incurred from this cause would, of course, fall entirely upon the Irish Exchequer (hear, hear). Under these circumstances what would the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer have to do? He would have to do one of two things—either to levy further taxation, or to repudiate the obligations imposed by this Magna Charta of Ireland. Sir, I thought the statement of the hon. member for Cork on this subject was rather ominous. He did not express by any means hearty approval of this part of the scheme. He did not give it a cheerful acceptance.

No Finality.

If, then, we do not consent to make this further contribution, and to lay a further obligation upon the British taxpayer, the scheme will only be accepted grudgingly; and you may be sure that before two or three years have passed away there will be an attempt to get it revised or altered; and if that attempt is persistent, we know what persistency does in a matter of this kind. Then we are told by the advocates of this proposal that we can enforce the bargain, the statutory provisions, by force. I think there may be difficulty in the employment of force. At any rate it is a contingency which we do not like to contemplate when we are making what we are told the Government hope will be a final settlement (hear, hear). I confess, Sir, that for my part, rather than face an agitation which I foresee would be the certain result of a proposal of this kind in the form presented to us, rather than face the irritation between the two countries, the panics which from time to time would prevail and which would inevitably have the tendency to increase our Army and Navy establishments—rather than face the distraction of all domestic legislation which will be consequent upon a foreign policy complicated, as it will be, by the existence of Ireland in its new and quasi-independent situation—I would vote for separation pure and simple (Opposition cheers). I would wipe off the obligations which exist between England and Ireland as a bad debt; I would prefer that Ireland should go free altogether from any

claim on the part of this country, provided also that we might be free from the enormous responsibility which I believe a sham union would certainly entail (Opposition cheers). I think the scheme will come to that in the end, and I would rather face it at once (hear, hear).

ALTERNATIVES.

Before I sit down I should like to try to answer the question put by the Prime Minister, "What alternative have you got?" I believe this question to be so vital and critical that I think men are bound, however little authority they may have in such a matter, still to do their best to promote a solution of it (hear hear). Every man is bound to bring his petty contribution. Although I might say to the Prime Minister, using his own language, that it is not for any one who is not a responsible Minister to propose a plan which only a responsible Government has the information properly to prepare, yet I will not take refuge behind that precedent. I might say that it certainly would be a most strange doctrine that a man should be forbidden to refuse a prescription which he thinks to be dangerous because he has not a patent remedy which he believes to be a perfect cure. I should think that it would be still stranger that the physician should be called upon to commit suicide if he could not provide an absolute remedy for the disease of his patient (laughter). My right hon. friend appears to be under the impression that the only remedy which the opponents of this scheme would propose is that of coercion carried out in a manner and to an extent never hitherto contemplated. That is not my alternative. I do not believe it is the only alternative (hear, hear). But before I come to that, I think it is only fair that I should ask the advocates of this scheme, "How do you propose to carry out this scheme without coercion, and how, if it be adopted, do you propose to maintain its provisions without force?" (Opposition cheers.)

TWO RACES AND TWO RELIGIONS.

It is one of the great difficulties of this problem that Ireland is not a homogeneous community—that it consists of two nations (cries of "No, no," from the Home Rule members, and

Opposition cheers), that it is a nation which comprises two races and two religions. At least hon. members will not deny that whatever the Roman Catholics of Ireland may think of this matter, it is certain that the Protestants will believe, rightly or wrongly, that it is injurious to them, and that they will resist it (Opposition cheers, and cries of "no, no"). I am not pledging my opinion to the statements that have been made that they will resist by force. I know nothing about that. But I say that their opposition is to be reckoned with and counted upon, and that it ought not to be ignored by this House (hear, hear). I have not a word to say against the Roman Catholic population of Ireland, but I certainly might say a good deal in favour of the Protestant population (hear, hear). In Ulster they are prosperous, and industrious, and enterprising, and in Ulster they have rivalled the peaceful activity of Glasgow, of Manchester, and of Birmingham (hear, hear). Throughout the three southern provinces you find the Protestants scattered here and there in isolated groups, and wherever they exist they are the nucleus of industry and enterprise, and the rallying point for all the loyal population (loud cheers).

Will you Coerce the Loyal?

If you are going to carry this scheme in the face of the opposition of one-fifth of the population of Ireland—I believe the proportion is even greater (no, no),—and if, unhappily, they should feel their interests so much compromised that they resist your decision, how are you to enforce it? Are you going to apply coercion to the loyal and law-abiding population, while you taunt us with a desire and intention, which does not, in fact, exist, to apply it to those who have not always been loyal or law-abiding? (cheers.) I go further, and I ask, how are you going to enforce the provisions of your statutory Parliament with the conditions and the limitations you have imposed? It is perfectly certain that they will be objected to, and be the subject of agitation (hear, hear). You will have resolutions of this Irish Parliament protesting against them, and in some times of difficulty and danger you may have these resolutions supported by threats. What are you going

to do? You must admit that force is at the bottom of your proposition, and when you come to the foundation there is still coercion, unless, indeed, you mean to tell us you will surrender everything' rather than use force; in which case, why not surrender everything at once? The peculiarity of your coercion is that you postpone it until it may be difficult or even impossible of application. I will, however, give a more practical answer to the question of the Prime Minister than any *tu quoque*, however effective it might be. I do not believe that coercion is the only or the necessary alternative. I say that after the facts which were stated by the leaders of the late Government, and which were repeated and confirmed last night by the Prime Minister, as to the present state of affairs in Ireland, there is, as yet, at all events, no case for coercion. The number of outrages is comparatively small; there is no great social disorder; there is a certain amount of intimidation, no doubt, but there is no case for coercion. The influence of the hon. member for Cork, of his friends, and of the National League has been sufficient to prevent people from doing anything in the nature of extended outrage (Home Rule cheers). I hope that that influence which has been so effective will be continued; but I do not rely on that alone (cheers).

THE AGRARIAN DIFFICULTY IS THE ROOT OF THE MATTER.

What is the cause that makes a recrudescence of crime possible in Ireland? It is connected with the agrarian situation. There lies the danger. If any discontent should be felt in consequence of a refusal to grant the demands of the Irish people, that discontent may take the form of refusing to pay rent, and then, if rent were sought to be recovered by the ordinary legal processes, outrage, violence, and crime would undoubtedly follow. But if we could put this cause out of the way, is there any reason to anticipate that there would be any such crime as would justify or necessitate any resort to repressive measures? My first answer to the Prime Minister, then, is this: I would put this cause out of the way for a time; I would try to continue the truce—it might almost be called the truce of God—happily existent in Ireland now; I would

bring in a Bill to stay all evictions for a period of six months, saving any arrears to be settled in connection with the final settlement; and as this would be done in the interests of the United Kingdom, I would throw upon the Government the duty of lending to those landlords who might have any need of it such a proportion of their rents, as would save them from necessity and privation (laughter from the Opposition). I would take from the landlords, for a great Imperial purpose, their present legal right of process for the recovery of rents, which might possibly amount to four millions sterling, and I would advance, if necessary, on the security of the land, a specified proportion of those rents, until the whole matter should have been settled. I would do that without hesitation, as the risk of such a transaction would be infinitesimal as compared with the risks of which we shall hear something later on (Opposition cheers). I would hope by these means, by putting a stop to the procedure which has been a prime cause of crime and outrage in Ireland—I would hope that we should get a further interval of six months, which could be used for finding a settlement of this question. I admit that it cannot remain altogether unsettled (cheers).

A National and not a Party Settlement.

I would carry on the inquiry which has been begun by the Prime Minister and the Government, but I would no longer have it carried on by a single individual, however colossal his intelligence may be (cheers). I would not have it carried on by a single party, however important, however influential, it may be. I would strive to carry it on with the assent and co-operation of all parties in the House (cheers). I would have it carried on by a Committee or Commission which would represent all the sections of this House, both parties of Englishmen and Scotchmen, both parties of Irishmen also. I hope the House does not think that I am presuming (Opposition cheers). I feel there is some presumption in offering an opinion, but I do it only in answer to the demand—the request—which was made by the Prime Minister.

FEDERATION THE TRUE PRINCIPLE.

In what direction, then, do I think the solution is to be found? It has been assumed in some quarters that I am pedantically devoted to some plan of national councils, of which a good deal was heard some six months ago. That is a mistake. My right hon. friend will bear me out when I say that I did not think it worth while, in the face of the much greater, much more complete, much more important proposal which he made even to offer one word in favour of national councils. The notion of national councils was started to meet a different state of things and a different problem. It was started in connection with a scheme for a thorough municipal government in Ireland, and in connection with that I think it was a very good notion. But it has at the present moment one fatal defect—if hon. members opposite were at any time disposed to give it their consideration they are no longer willing to do so; they reject it (Home Rule cheers); and under those circumstances Heaven forefend that any English party should attempt to impose that benefit upon them. The question is now different. At the time when I thought there was something in the idea of a municipal council as affording a vent to a great deal of political activity in Ireland, my proposals were considered too extreme by some of my colleagues, who have now been successful in making them too moderate (cheers, and laughter from the Opposition). Those national councils I, for one, am not likely to put forward again. I no longer regard that scheme as a solution, and I confess that after the speech of my right hon. friend, after the fact that a most important proportion of one of the great parties in the State has been willing at all events to entertain the proposal of the right hon. gentleman, it is only a very large proposal which can at any future time be accepted as a solution of this vast question (hear, hear). I should look for the solution in the direction of the principle of federation. My right hon. friend has rather looked for his model to the relations between this country and her self-governing and practically independent colonies. I think that that is of doubtful expediency (cheers). The present connection between our colonies and ourselves is no doubt very strong, owing to the affection which exists between

members of the same nation. But it is a sentimental tie only. It is rather curious that my right hon. friend should have looked in this direction just at the moment when between the colonies and this country there is a general desire to draw tighter the bonds which unite us and to bring the whole Empire into one federation. I can hardly bring myself to believe that the hon. member for Cork looks with entire satisfaction upon a proposal which will substitute such a connection as that which exists between Canada and this country—a connection which might be broken to-morrow if there were the slightest desire on the part of Canada to terminate it, because no one would think of employing force in order to tie any reluctant self-governing colony in continued bonds to this country—I think the hon. member for Cork would hardly like to see a tie of that kind substituted for that which at present exists. At all events if he would he would differ from many distinguished Irishmen who have preceded him. I will not quote some of the great orators of a past generation; but I will quote Mr. Butt, who, speaking ten years ago in this House, said,—

"He, for one, was not willing to give up his share in the power and government of that Empire, and really since the Union he did not see how it was possible to give it up. Since the Union the wars which had brought possessions to England had been carried on by the spending of Irish treasure and the shedding of Irish blood. India had been won by the British Empire in the same way, and Ireland had acquired with England partnership rights which it would be impossible to distribute, and of which Ireland could only have her share by continuing to be represented in that House."

It may be that Mr. Butt's views are rather antiquated at this time; but I would refer to an opinion of a distinguished member of the party opposite. I mean the hon. member for Sligo (Mr. Sexton), who, speaking at Dublin the other day, said:—

"If we do not retain a voice in Imperial affairs and keep part and parcel of the Imperial Parliament, the country will be degraded to the position of a province." Well, that is what Irish members are asked to agree to under the scheme of my right hon. friend. It appears to me that the advantage of a

system of federation is that Ireland might under it really remain an integral portion of the Empire. The action of such a scheme is centripetal and not centrifugal, and it is in the direction of federation that the democratic movement has made most advances in the present century. My right hon. friend has referred to foreign precedents, but surely they are all against him. He did not refer to united Italy. In Italy different nations, different States, which have had independent existences for centuries, have been welded together. Even where federation has been adopted it has always been in the case of federating States which were previously separate. It has been intended to bring nations together, to lessen their causes of difference, and to draw them more closely in a common union. Take the case of Germany, for instance (cheers). Germany has been united upon a system of federation which has brought together nations long separated. Take the great case—the greatest case of all—of the United States of America. You have there the greatest democracy the world has ever seen and a democracy which has known how to fight in order to maintain its union. It has fought for, and triumphantly maintained, the Imperial union of the United States, but it has known also how to respect all local differences (Home Rule cheers). Yes, Sir, I remember that in the time of its greatest crisis, when it was in the most terrible moment of its fate, my right hon. friend counselled the disintegration of the United States.

MR. GLADSTONE: I did not counsel it.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: My right hon. friend says he did not counsel it; but he gave the weight of his great name to the statement that the Northern and Southern States had become separate nations. Well, Sir, no one doubted at that time the sincerity of my right hon. friend or the purity of his motives. Nobody doubts them now, but everybody will admit—I daresay my right hon. friend himself would admit—that in that view of the situation in the United States he made a mistake.

MR. GLADSTONE: Hear, hear.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: Are you certain he is not making a mistake again? (loud Opposition cheers.) Well, Sir, I say

that in my view the solution of this question should be sought in some form of federation which would really maintain the Imperial unity, and which would at the same time conciliate the desire for a national local government which is felt so strongly by the constituents of hon. members opposite. I do not say that we should imitate the great models to which I have referred. Our constitution and the circumstances of the case are different. I say I believe that it is on these lines, not on the lines of our relations with self-governing colonies, that it is possible to find a solution of the difficulty (cheers). I have now only to thank the House for the indulgence which it has given to me (Opposition cheers). I regret that my explanation has been necessarily to some extent incomplete. I have, however, said sufficient to put the House in possession of the main reasons why I have ceased to be a Minister of the Crown. Sir, there are some persons, servile partisans, who disgrace political life, who say that I have been guilty of treachery because I have resigned an office which I could no longer hold with honour. What would these men have been entitled to say of me if, holding the opinions that I do, which I expressed before joining the Government, and which I have expressed to-day, I had remained on that bench pretending to serve my country with a lie upon my lips? (loud cheers.) I do not assume, Heaven knows I do not pretend, to dogmatize on a question of this kind. I do not say that I am right in the conclusion at which I have arrived; I do not presume to condemn those who honestly differ from me: but of one thing I am certain—that I should have been guilty of an incredible shame and baseness if I had clung to place and office in support of a policy which in my heart I believe to be injurious to the best interests of Ireland and Great Britain (loud Opposition cheers).

HOUSE OF COMMONS, April 16th, 1886.

MR. GLADSTONE'S LAND PURCHASE BILL.

[Mr. Gladstone introduced his Land Purchase Bill on April 16th, recommending it to Parliament in a speech of great length. Mr. Chamberlain immediately followed, and after completing the personal explanation in which he had been interrupted by the Prime Minister on a previous occasion, proceeded to state the objections to the Government proposals from a Radical point of view.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: I do not propose to enter upon any lengthened examination of the very powerful and lucid statement just made by my right hon. friend; but it appears to me to be a duty which I owe to the House that I should take the first possible opportunity of completing the statement which I attempted to make the other night as to the reasons which led me to quit the Government of my right hon. friend (hear, hear). I much regret the misapprehension which arose on that occasion as to the limits accorded to me by Her Majesty's permission; but my right hon. friend, in subsequently referring to this matter, spoke with so much kindness and generosity, and gave to the House so unqualified an assurance of his confidence in my good faith with regard to it, that I do not think it necessary to make any further allusion to it (Ministerial cheers). I recognise the necessity, even the physical necessity, which has led my right hon. friend to divide the two branches of the vast subject which he has brought before the House. I recognise the necessity, but at the same time I cannot help saying that it involves many inconveniences—inconveniences to my right hon. friend in the exposition of his plan, inconveniences also to those who have taken exception to some portion of that plan (hear, hear). One thing the House will clearly see, that the whole plan of

my right hon. friend must be dealt with together. You cannot break it up into fractions (hear, hear). If there were any doubt as to the fact that the plan which has been to-night elaborated before the House is an essential complement of the plan laid before us the other night, I think that that doubt would disappear in the face of the statement that has been made by my right hon. friend, who has told us again and again what he told us in introducing the Irish Local Government Bill, that the two questions of Irish land and Irish government are, in his view, "closely and inseparably connected, for they are the two channels through which we hope to find access; and effectual access, to that question which is the most vital of all —namely, the question of social order in Ireland." I might also refer to the remarkable statement made at an earlier period by the Chief Secretary for Ireland. He was speaking at Chelmsford on the 7th of January, when, in reference to the same matter, he said that any approach to a satisfactory settlement of the Irish question must involve dealing with the land question. "The beginning, no doubt, of any approach to any satisfactory settlement of Ireland must be some dealing with the land question. The late Government, to their great honour, passed an Act to prevent landlords confiscating the property of their tenants. That was a noble exploit. I do not think that we shall be able to deal satisfactorily with Ireland until we have passed some legislation to prevent tenants from confiscating the property of their landlords." I refer to this statement to show that it is essential that we should have the whole matter before us before we can deal with any part of it (hear). And when I had to consider the question whether I should continue in the Government, I had to ask myself, not whether I liked the scheme for the government of Ireland, but whether I liked it so much that I was prepared to risk the money of the British taxpayer to the extent of £120,000,000 to secure that plan being adopted.

Mr. Gladstone: I would remind my right hon. friend that there was no question of £120,000,000. I stated before him and before my colleagues that, so far as the subject of land was concerned, I had in view modifications and alterations of the

plan which would go far to bridge over the differences between us. Upon the details of those modifications we never entered.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—I cannot carry back my memory to the exact words of the right hon. gentleman, but no doubt he is quite accurate. But what I will say in my own justification is, that I had not the slightest conception at the time I left the Government that it was the intention of the Prime Minister to reduce the sum of £120,000,000 which he had first mentioned in the proportion to which he now proposes to reduce it (Opposition cheers).

REASONS FOR RESIGNING.

I can, however, best put before the House the views which I then entertained on the subject by reading the letter which I wrote to the Prime Minister on the 15th of March, in which I tendered my resignation. I wrote as follows:

"40, PRINCE'S GARDENS, S.W., *March* 15th, 1886.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—I have carefully considered the results of the discussion on Saturday, and I have come, with the deepest reluctance, to the conclusion that I shall not be justified in attending the meeting of the Cabinet on Tuesday, and that I must ask you to lay my resignation before Her Majesty. You will remember that in accepting office I expressed grave doubts as to the probability of my being able to support your Irish policy. Up to that time, however, no definite proposals had been formulated by you, and it was only on Saturday last that you were in a position to make a communication to the Cabinet on the subject. Without entering on unnecessary details, I may say that you proposed a scheme of Irish land purchase which involved an enormous and unprecedented use of British credit, in order, in your own words, 'to afford to the Irish landlord refuge and defence from a possible mode of government in Ireland which he regards as fatal to him.' This scheme, while contemplating only a trifling reduction of the judicial rents fixed before the recent fall in prices, would commit the British taxpayer to tremendous obligations, accompanied, in my opinion, with serious risk of ultimate loss. The greater part of the land of Ireland would be handed over to a new Irish elective authority, who would thus be at once the landlords and the delegates of the Irish tenants. I fear that these two capacities would be found inconsistent, and that the tenants, unable or unwilling

to pay the rents demanded, would speedily elect an authority pledged to give them relief and to seek to recoup itself by an early repudiation of what would be described as the English tribute. With these anticipations I was naturally anxious to know what was the object for which this risk was to be incurred and for what form of Irish government it was intended to pave the way. I gathered from your statements that, although your plans are not finally matured, yet that you have come to the conclusion that any extension of local govern on municipal lines, including even the creation of a he council, or councils, for purely Irish business, would be entirely inadequate, and that you are convinced of the necessity for conceding a separate legislative assembly for Ireland, with full powers to deal with all Irish affairs. I understood that you would exclude from their competence the control of the army and navy and the direction of foreign and colonial policy, but that you would allow them to arrange their own customs tariff, to have entire control of the civil forces of the country, and even, if they thought fit, to establish a volunteer army. It appears to me that a proposal of this kind must be regarded as tantamount to a proposal for separation. I think it is even worse, because it would set up an unstable and temporary form of government, which would be a source of perpetual irritation and agitation until the full demands of the Nationalist party were conceded. The Irish Parliament would be called upon to pay three or four millions a year as its contribution to the National Debt and the army and navy, and it would be required, in addition, to pay nearly five millions a year for interest and sinking fund on the cost of Irish land. These charges would be felt to be so heavy a burden on a poor country that persistent controversy would arise thereupon, and the due fulfilment of their obligations by the new Irish authority could only be enforced by a military intervention, which would be undertaken with every disadvantage, and after all the resources of the country and the civil executive power had been surrendered to the Irish national Government. I conclude, therefore, that the policy which you propose to recommend to Parliament and the country practically amounts to a proposal that Great Britain should burden itself with an enormous addition to the National Debt and probably also to an immediate increase of taxation, not in order to secure the closer and more effective union of the three kingdoms, but, on the contrary, to purchase the repeal of the Union and the practical separation of Ireland from England and Scotland. My public utterances and my conscientious

convictions are absolutely opposed to such a policy, and I feel that the differences which have now been disclosed are so vital that I can no longer entertain the hope of being of service in the Government. I must, therefore, respectfully request you to take the necessary steps for relieving me of the office I have the honour to hold.

"I am, yours very truly,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN."

Sir, I can only say that in the correspondence which took place upon that letter my right hon. friend said, in effect, that although he thought that upon some details it might be possible to take exception to my statement or to modify my objections, yet that he was not hopeful of being able to do so with regard to the main objections which I took. That was the state of things, and I hope that that may be considered as concluding my personal explanation. That was really the state of things at the time that I quitted the Government. Since that time I must admit that great developments—considerable modifications—have taken place.

MR. GLADSTONE.—Perhaps the House will allow me in personal explanation to say that I am totally at a loss to understand the foundation of the idea that the right hon. gentleman entertains that I ever contemplated the formation of the volunteer army in Ireland. There has been no change whatever from the first in anything that relates to the subject of the army and defence. It stands exactly as it did. In the letter which my right hon. friend has read he has certainly paid me the greatest compliment that I ever knew to be paid to a Prime Minister: because my right hon. friend did me the honour to resign, not upon anything done by the Cabinet or anything proposed to the Cabinet for adoption, but upon the first signification in the Cabinet of what I may call an early edition of a plan which I had personally framed (Home Rule cheers).

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—With reference to what my right hon. friend has now said about the volunteer army, all I have to say is that I gathered his intention from conversation, that I put that intention in the letter which I wrote to him, and that he did not take exception to it in the correspondence which

followed (Opposition cheers). I quite accept my right hon. friend's statement that he never intended to put it in. I am only saying this in my own justification. I could not know that I had misunderstood him, because, probably in the press of business, or for any other reason, he did not think it necessary, or worth his while, to correct my misapprehension.

MR. GLADSTONE.—I took exception to the entire letter.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—Well, Sir, as regards what my right hon. friend has just said, that I resigned at a time when the proposals of my right hon. friend had not received their final shape, I will remind him of my own reasons for that resignation, which I think he will himself admit had considerable weight. I thought enough had been said to indicate a determination on the part of my right hon. friend and an intention on the part of a majority of my colleagues in the Cabinet to bring before the House proposals to which I was in grave and serious opposition. Well, Sir, then I thought it was not fair, either to my right hon. friend or to the Government, that I should remain among them. I remember the expression I used at the time to be "a chiel amang you takin notes"; that I should remain, as it were—I am using the words about myself, and therefore am not using it in an offensive sense—as a sort of spy (hear, hear, from Mr. Healy, and cries of "Order"), after it had already become apparent to my mind that we were not likely to be able to agree (cheers). Well, Sir, that was the reason why I thought it honourable, and even honest, to tender my resignation to my right hon. friend at the moment that these differences first disclosed themselves (cheers). But when my right hon. friend told me he thought my resignation was premature, and asked me to remain until his proposals had assumed a more definite shape, of course I acceded to his request, and accordingly, as the House is aware, my resignation was not really accepted till March 27th.

SUBSEQUENT CHANGES IN THE HOME RULE BILL.

Well, Sir, I was proceeding to say that since the time to which I have referred some changes or developments have taken place in the proposals of my right hon. friend. In

the first place—and this is a matter of great importance—the control of the customs and excise has been retained by the Imperial Parliament, and has been taken from the control of the new legislative body to be established in Dublin—that is to say, three-quarters of the existing Imperial taxation of Ireland is to be retained by the Parliament at Westminster. But then my right hon. friend stated in his concluding speech in the debate on Tuesday night—I am not certain whether I am quoting his exact words, but I will say what I understood—that he was inclined to reserve for further consideration the question of the retention of the Irish members in the Parliament at Westminster (cheers). He referred to what he called the weighty speech of my right hon. friend the member for Bedford on this subject, and the strong opinion that had been expressed in many quarters in reference to it (cheers), and, as I understood, my right hon. friend does not dismiss the possibility of that retention from his further consideration (cheers). But, Sir, that is a matter of first and cardinal importance (cheers). It is a matter to which I have always attached the greatest possible weight, because if the Irish members are retained at Westminster the Imperial Parliament remains the Imperial Parliament (cheers), and its supremacy would then be an established fact. The legislative authority in Dublin—you may call it a Parliament—will be a subordinate and not a co-equal authority; and in that case, and if my right hon. friend is willing, as I understood him to be willing, to leave also an open question the inclusion of Ulster in this scheme, so that there may be two legislative authorities in Ireland instead of one——(laughter from the Home Rule members). Hon. members opposite may not like it, but that is distinctly what my right hon. friend said in introducing this measure (Opposition cheers); and I say that if it should be the pleasure of the House to retain the Irish members at Westminster and to make two assemblies in Ireland instead of one, then, except in the name, I think it would be very difficult to see very much difference between this proposal and the proposal of national councils which was referred to by my right hon. friend the member for the Border Burghs, or

a single national council, which I myself supported in June last.

Other Changes must Follow.

Well, Sir, if these great changes are to be made, as I sincerely hope they will be made, then other changes not less important will follow. What has been the necessity for the safeguards which my right hon. friend has proposed in such numbers? He has not proposed them because he likes them himself. He has told you that for his part he has no apprehension. It is because of the apprehension which he knew would be created by an authority so important as the one which was proposed in the first scheme of this measure. But if the authorities created are to be subordinate local assemblies in Ireland, then I say there is no need whatever for all these precautions, for the life peerages in the legislative assembly, for the *ex-officio* members, for the property qualifications, for the provision of minority representation, all of which I do not hesitate to say are hateful to every Radical (cheers), and certainly contrary to the practice of the Liberal party. Well, Sir, I say that in these changes, and in the prospect of greater changes to come, I rejoice to see an approximation between the views of my right hon. friend and my own (cheers), which I did not dare to hope for at the time I left the Cabinet.

Serious Objections Remain.

I confess that with regard to the Bill which my right hon. friend now seeks leave to introduce I am afraid that very serious differences of opinion will still exist. I objected to the original proposal of my right hon. friend because, in the first place, it involved such an enormous sum of money. I thought it might have been possible to deal at all events with the most urgent part of this question by employing to a very much less extent British credit. I objected, in the second place, because I thought that in the scheme as it originally stood there was not sufficient security for the repayment of the money, and that the British taxpayer would probably have to make it good. And I objected, in the third place, because I thought that the scheme as originally introduced did not provide sufficient advantage for the poor

tenant, with whom I had the greatest sympathy, and that, in fact, its central idea was wrong, inasmuch as it was brought in less for the advantage of the tenant of Ireland than to modify the supposed hostility of the Irish landlord (cheers). Now, Sir, to some extent these objections have been met. For instance, my right hon. friend, as I understand his plan, now proposes that the Irish tenant should have an immediate advantage to the extent of 20 per cent. on his present rent. That is a good deal more than my right hon. friend was able to anticipate at the time when I was in the Government. That is a very important question, because the way in which his scheme will be received in Ireland must depend to a very large extent indeed upon the immediate boon it affords to the Irish tenant (Home Rule cheers). Then, in the second place, my right hon. friend, in a way which I confess I was not clever enough to follow very clearly during his speech, proposes to limit the issue of consols, that was to have been limited to £120,000,000, as I understand, to £50,000,000. Well, my difficulty is this.

MR. GLADSTONE.—£113,000,000.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—Both figures were mentioned by my right hon. friend. In the paper he presented to the Cabinet, £113,000,000 was, I think, my right hon. friend's estimate of the extent to which his option would be taken advantage of by the Irish landlords,—he will correct me if I am wrong,—and £120,000,000 was to be the sum to which any issue of consols was to be limited, and the issue was to extend over a considerable term of years. Well, at the present moment my right hon. friend proposes to reduce, as I understand, the liability on the issue of consols to £50,000,000. But, then, this is my difficulty. As I understand, option is to be given, in the words of my right hon. friend, to every landowner with regard to all his rented agricultural land (hear, hear). Well, but I suppose the rented agricultural land of Ireland at twenty years' purchase is worth at least £150,000,000 sterling. I suppose that is the least sum (cries of "No, no"); well, then, let any one who differs from me put his own estimate on it? This option is to be offered to every landowner to the extent of £150,000,000, and he puts it forward as a very tempting one to the Irish

landlords. If that be so, why should not all avail themselves of it (hear, hear). In that case you may, in the first year, have a demand for £150,000,000, and if that is accepted, how are you to limit the issue of consols? My right hon. friend proposes to issue scrip, but that is only the difference between the ordinary and the floating debt. So far as the liability of the British taxpayer is concerned it is precisely the same (hear, hear). There is another point in which the changes made by my right hon. friend are much more satisfactory. My right hon. friend now proposes to retain the customs and excise with the Imperial Parliament. That makes a great difference in the security. The operation proposed by my right hon. friend in the original Bill will now be reversed, and instead of Ireland having to pay a large sum to England, it will be England who will have to pay back to Ireland the balance of the revenue of Ireland, after having recouped herself for interest and sinking fund. I do not mean to say that that means absolute security, but it certainly makes a great change, and one which will commend itself to the House when it comes to consider this proposal. Now, Sir, these alterations have lessened to some extent, though I cannot say they have removed, my objections to this measure (hear, hear).

Who is to be Thanked for these Changes?

I want to make an appeal to some of my hon. friends around me, especially in this quarter of the House, who have been very lavish of their criticisms upon the action which I thought it my duty, with great reluctance, to take in resigning my office. Do they think that these changes are improvements, and are they going to accept them? If they are not, then, Sir, they lay themselves open to that charge of treachery and desertion which they have so freely brought against me in the last few days (hear, hear). But if they are going to accept them, they decidedly, though indirectly, justify the action taken by myself and my right hon. friend the member for the Border Burghs in resigning our offices, because at that time, at any rate, we had no idea that these modifications could be or would be intro-

duced. Well, Sir, I have said that, even in its present form, this measure is open to very serious objection.

WHY IS ONLY ONE CLASS TO BE PROTECTED?

In the first place, I cannot help asking this question—If Ireland is going to be trusted with a practically independent Parliament, with the interests of the commercial classes, with the maintenance of civil and religious liberty, and the protection of social order, why, then, is it not to be trusted with the protection of the minority which is formed by one particular class of the community? If the commercial classes and Protestants of Ireland and any other minority are safe in the hands of the new authority, why are not the landlords also, and why cannot you leave their interests to the new authority? (hear, hear.) What we are doing is, to my mind, a matter of doubtful expediency. We are imposing a bargain on the Irish people which they do not like, as was clearly shown by the silence of hon. members opposite during the speech of my right hon. friend. Is there a single man upon those benches who will dare to get up and say that he is of opinion that the price to be paid for the rights of Irish landlords is fair and one which he can approve? No, Sir. What is the price to be paid? My right hon. friend assumed that four-fifths of the landlords would come under his option, and he assumed that the value of their property would be £113,000,000 —that is at the rate for the whole of the tenantable land of Ireland of nearly £150,000,000, and it was upon this estimate that this scheme is based. It is upon that estimate that you representing Ireland will have to give your consent to a permanent payment, to be extorted from the people of Ireland for the interest and the Sinking Fund. Are Irishmen willing to reckon £150,000,000 as a fair price to be paid for Irish land? I was very much struck the other day with an observation of Mr. Davitt, for whom, though I have never known him, I have conceived a great respect from his speeches, and who, perhaps more than any other Irishman on the Nationalist side, has distinguished himself by his denunciation, both in America and in Ireland, of the outrages and the policy

of crime by which the National movement has been disfigured. I believe him to be an honourable and an honest man, and not the least able in the long roll of Irish political agitators. The other day he said that, while he approved of the general character of the scheme which he assumed the Government were going to propose, he thought that if £150,000,000, or anything like it, were talked of it would be an absurd valuation; for his own part he would put it at nearer £50,000,000, or £60,000,000. The hon. member for Cork has again and again referred to the prairie value of the land as the proper standard; other members of the Nationalist party have mentioned five years' purchase, and in one case three years have been given as the fair price to be paid for buying out the Irish landlords (laughter). I am not stopping to inquire whether these prices are fair, but the question is whether the Irish tenants will think them fair (hear, hear). I look forward with some fear to the possibility of repayment of the money based upon rent fixed on a valuation which is four or even six times as much as has been fixed by the leaders of Irish opinion (hear, hear).

The Fall in Prices.

Again, the prices are to be fixed at twenty years' purchase on the net rents payable in 1885. But we are in the midst of a great and remarkable change in the value of agricultural produce. I am told that this value has fallen in Ireland since the Land Act from twenty to forty per cent. Are you sure it will stop there? Are you sure that the resources of South America to send dead meat to this country or of India to send corn have been exhausted? I confess that I am not, and that I should be sorry to base any great financial undertaking upon the certainty that there will be no further fall in the prices of agricultural produce. Sir James Caird has told us that with regard to one-half of the agricultural holdings in Ireland the economic rent has ceased to exist. I think he is wrong, and he does not sufficiently take into account the sums which are paid for the tenant right of some of these miserable holdings. But I shall not stop now to inquire. The point is, Do you think it likely that the Irish tenants will forget a statement made by so great an

authority, or that they will be satisfied to pay a price based upon an estimate which they are told on the authority of those whom they have themselves elected is an extravagant one? There is another point. My right hon. friend has made what he calls a tempting offer to the landlords of Ireland. I do not think that they will have very much temptation to remain there. They will obtain their rents in the form of claims on the British Treasury of three per cent. consols or new three per cents. Where will they spend their incomes? Why, Sir, in one of the finest passages in the speech of my right hon. friend to which we have just listened he spoke of the curse that absenteeism had been to Ireland and which it is now (hear, hear). Are you prepared to make absenteeism universal? The general result of this will be that every landlord who took his money in the shape of this option would have no longer any reason to remain in the country, and it stands to reason that in the vast majority of cases the money would be spent out of Ireland and not at home (hear, hear). Well, Sir, my right hon. friend has said that he considers that there is an absolute certainty for the payment of this loan which is proposed. I confess that I am afraid that the tenants may hesitate in the future, even when the rent is reduced, as in this scheme, to pay the interest to a State authority, whether under the name of a Receiver-General or any other name. But in that case my right hon. friend thinks that this loss will fall upon the Irish authority. Is that so certain? (hear, hear.) When you have a poor country, unable to pay its way, forced to contribute to England something like £4,000,000 for the army and navy and National Debt, although, as my right hon. friend says, the receipts of England from Ireland are at the present time practically insignificant,—

A Foreign Bargain—

and when the people are forced also to pay rents on an English and not an Irish valuation, I think that the bargain will appear to the Irish people as a foreign bargain (cheers)—that it will come to them in a foreign garb and dress, and hereafter they will think that they have an equitable right to repudiate it

(hear, hear). If they repudiate it, I want to know what force there is in this House, in this country, to insure the fulfilment of conditions which can only be fulfilled by the good will of the Irish people (cheers). It is all very well to appeal to the honour of the Irish people, and to ask us to trust their honour. That would be very well if it were not that in its inception this scheme is repudiated by them in two of its most important particulars—namely, the amount of the contribution to be paid to the Imperial Exchequer, and the rate of purchase to be given to the holders of property (hear, hear). I confess I cannot disregard the idea of risk to the British taxpayer. I believe there is a great risk of failing to recover the sums lent if this scheme is carried out; and a step of this kind cannot be considered alone.

A Bad Precedent.

Remember what a precedent you are making. I was not very long at the Local Government Board, but I was there long enough to feel great alarm at the prospect of the future (hear, hear). If the depression of trade continues, and for my own part I am unable to see any favourable prospect of improvement, you will have hundreds of thousands of respectable, and honest, and hard-working artisans falling out of the employment they have hitherto held, and subjected to great privation, and you will have demands from these people for State assistance growing in force every day, which, if a precedent of this kind be created, will become absolutely irresistible (cheers). If I had no other reason for objecting to this scheme, one—and I think a sufficient one—would be that before very long we may want all this money for ourselves. You are refusing to the people of Scotland what I believe the majority of them want: that State aid should be given to the crofters—one of the most deserving classes of the population, and who have been reduced to misery by bad laws which throw upon us just as great a responsibility as any laws in Ireland (hear, hear). You are refusing, or at least postponing, aid to the agricultural labourers of England, who ask you to give them opportunities to improve their position, by securing for them some direct interest in the soil they cultivate. You cannot refuse it to the

crofters of Scotland and to the agricultural labourers of England and grant it to the people of Ireland (cheers). These are considerations which the House will do well to weigh before the second reading of the Bill.

Not an Irreconcilable Opponent.

For my own part I recognise the spirit of conciliation with which the Government has tried to meet some of the objections already taken. I need not assure my right hon. friend or my friends around me that the differences which, unfortunately, for a time—I hope it may be only a short time (cheers)—have separated me from my right hon. friend have not impaired my respect and regard for his character and abilities (hear, hear). I am not an irreconcilable opponent (cheers). My right hon. friend has made very considerable modifications in his Bill. All I can say is if that movement continues, as I hope it may, I shall be delighted to be relieved from an attitude which I have only assumed with the greatest reluctance, and which I can only maintain with the deepest pain and regret (cheers).

BIRMINGHAM, April 21st, 1886.

A MEETING WITH CONSTITUENTS.

[The Annual Meeting of the Birmingham Liberal Association ("The Two Thousand") was held in the Town Hall. There was a very large attendance. Mr. J. Chamberlain, M.P., attended the meeting by invitation, to deliver an address upon Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule and Land Bills.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, who was received with prolonged cheering, said: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, whatever view this meeting of the representatives of this great constituency may take on the subject which has called us together, I am convinced that upon one point we shall all be agreed, and that no one will under-estimate the gravity and the importance of the discussion to which we are invited (hear, hear). On the one hand, we have the venerable and trusted leader of the Liberal party (loud cheers), who invites us to consider the scheme which he believes will put an end to that perennial Irish difficulty which has been the anxiety, and almost the despair, of politicians for so many years; and, on the other hand, we have also to consider that if by any chance he should now be mistaken, if we should be over-sanguine, over-hasty, in accepting his views, we shall take a step that we cannot retrace (prolonged cheering), which may be disastrous to the interests of the United Kingdom, and which may lessen, if it does not destroy, the power and the influence of that mighty Empire which has been built up and left to us as a heritage by our forefathers (cheers), and which has done so much to promote the civilization and the freedom of the world (cheers). Gentlemen, we have often discussed important questions on this platform. We have discussed the reform of the land laws, the provision for national education; we have discussed the question of Church establishment, and the question of the extension of popular liberties; but on all those

occasions we have been discussing questions which may fairly be considered as within the limits of the State (hear, hear). Now we are called upon to face a question upon which a wrong decision may imperil the existence of the State itself (cheers). I am very glad to have the opportunity which is afforded to me by our brief recess to confer with you, my friends and fellow-townsmen (hear, hear), whose sympathy and support has been afforded to me on so many occasions, and has given me strength in times of difficulty and anxiety (a voice—"And will again"; cheers), whose Liberalism no one has ever been bold enough to call in question, and whose judgment I have hitherto always been able cordially to accept (hear, hear). I thought in the first instance of appealing to those who are in a special sense my own constituents (cries of "Hear, hear")—my friends in West Birmingham (hear, hear). But it was urged upon me that I had not ceased to be one of the members for Birmingham (cheers), and that I might, without presumption and without any slight to those who have been good enough to return me to Parliament, address myself to you (hear, hear)—the representatives of the whole of what was once my constituency (cheers).

There is one other observation which I should like to make, by way of preface, before I come to the main subject of our discussion. I have said that we are discussing a matter which may concern the existence of the State. After that it may seem a small thing to say that upon our right conduct of this controversy depends the existence of the Liberal party as a great and potent force in the political life of the future (hear, hear). That is not a small matter to me (hear, hear). Fifteen or sixteen years ago I was drawn into politics by my interest in social questions, and by my desire to promote the welfare of the great majority of the population (hear, hear). At that time I saw the great majority—the masses of industrious, thrifty, hard-working artisans and labourers—condemned by bad laws, and by the neglect of their rulers, to a life of exacting toil, without the advantages and opportunities which education affords, and borne down by conditions which I thought to be unfair and unjust; and I looked to the Liberal party as

the means for removing and remedying those grievances, as the great instrument of progress and reform, and from that time to this I have done everything that an individual can do—I have made sacrifices of money, and time, and labour (hear, hear), I have made sacrifices of my opinions, to maintain the organization and to preserve the unity of the Liberal party (cheers). And even now, in this time of discouragement and anxiety, when personal friendships and political ties are breaking down under the strain of the dissensions which have been raised amongst us, I entreat of you to so continue this discussion that when this time of trial is past we may once more unite (loud cheers), without embittered memories, without unkind reflections, to carry forward the great work upon which hitherto we have been absolutely unanimous (cheers).

A New Order of Ideas.

Gentlemen, surely it is the very irony of fate that we should be here to-night to discuss a question which I will venture to say never entered into our thoughts or anticipations a few months ago (hear, hear), when we were engaged in the General Election. It is not very long ago since I was addressing you in this hall. I was congratulating you upon our success in Birmingham, upon our comparative success throughout the country, and upon the hopes which then burned in my breast that shortly we should see some considerable progress made towards the amelioration of the condition of the people, towards the solution of those great social problems which had excited our interest and our sympathy. I do not believe there was a man amongst us at that time who thought that in a few short weeks all these matters would be relegated to the dim and distant future—that we should be absorbed in this vast problem of reconstituting and remodelling the arrangements between the three kingdoms which constitute the British Empire (cheers). What has produced this great change in the situation? There is nothing new, there is nothing that was unexpected, in the condition of Ireland (hear, hear). There has been no popular demand in England or in Scotland (hear, hear). No; let us recognise the fact. The whole change is due to the force of

character, to the determination and to the courage, of one illustrious man (cheers), and although I regret the object for which these qualities have been displayed, I will say to you that never before has my admiration for them been so sincere and profound (cheers). But just think what is the nature of the change which has thus been effected. For eighty-six years the question of the repeal of the Union has been a matter of agitation in Ireland. It has been a fitful agitation (hear, hear), sinking or swelling with the changing condition of Irish politics and of Irish social problems. But during the whole of that period no English stateman has been found, including even the present Prime Minister (cheers),—no stateman has been found who has regarded this agitation as otherwise than sentimental; as being, that is to say, the expression of discontent with existing legislation, but not the fixed idea of the people of Ireland (hear, hear). I do not believe that there has been any Radical, any Liberal, of note who has hitherto—until very recently indeed—doubted that with the removal of the material grievances of Ireland this desire for separation would cease and die away (hear, hear). But now all this is changed (hear, hear), and it is changed just at the time when a Parliament has been elected strengthened by an infusion of democratic influence and feeling (hear, hear), and more ready than any Parliament that has ever existed to do justice to Ireland, to secure equality—to secure absolute equality—between the three kingdoms, to remove every grievance against which a reasonable complaint could be set up (hear, hear). Yet at this time we are asked to embark on a new order of ideas. We are asked once for all to give up the hope which I confess I have ever cherished, that in the course of time, with fairness, kindness, and, above all, justice (hear, hear), a policy of reconciliation pursued consistently by the Imperial Parliament might unite Ireland with Great Britain in bonds as firm and as close as those which now unite Scotland to England (hear, hear). All this we have to surrender, and we are asked to seek relief from present difficulties by giving up the hope of closer union, and to look for it in a loosening, if not in a severance, of the bonds which have hitherto held the peoples together (no, no, and applause).

Well, gentlemen, unless you have changed very much——("You have.") No; I have not changed (loud and prolonged cheering). What I say now with pain and grief I have said with your assent and approval (hear, hear), ever since I have been in public life; and I say that unless you have changed, this new view of the situation is a hard saying, and almost a humiliation.

THE BILL DOES NOT GO FAR ENOUGH.

There is only one person who can regard the situation—only one person in the three kingdoms who can regard the situation with unmixed satisfaction—only one person who has no past to appeal to which is inconsistent with his present opinions, and that is the distinguished leader of the Nationalist party in Ireland (hisses), the uncrowned king (laughter), Mr. Parnell (applause). Gentlemen, you all know that I have never, either in public or private, spoken with other than respect of Mr. Parnell. I believe him to be sincere and patriotic. I think very often he has been mistaken in his course; but at least I give him credit for perfect honesty of purpose, and I recognise in him a man who knows his own mind, who has stated his desires and demands again and again, and who has never withdrawn one jot from the position he has taken up. And now, when we are asked to consider the possibility of a final settlement of the Irish question, it becomes of more than ordinary importance that we should see what it is that the Irish people, through Mr. Parnell, have asked for. I could take, I think, almost every speech that Mr. Parnell has made haphazard during the last five or six years, and I could find repeated again and again the views that he has put forward. I will, however, call your attention to two of those speeches, which seem to me to put the position in a nutshell. In the first place, here is an extract from a speech which Mr. Parnell delivered at Cincinnati on February 23rd, 1880; he was speaking to the Irish-Americans, and he said: "None of us, whether in America or in Ireland, or wherever we may be, will be satisfied until we have destroyed the last link which keeps Ireland bound to England" (shame). That is a policy which Mr. Parnell has consistently pursued. My next quotation will show you also what are the

methods by which he has pursued it. I have said that as far as I know he has never varied in the slightest degree in the character or extent of his demands, but I am bound to say he has varied very much in his opinion of certain prominent statesmen (laughter). You will see from the quotation that I am about to give you that he did not always speak of Mr. Gladstone with the respect and admiration which I am glad to think he now sincerely feels for him (laughter). This is from a speech which was delivered at Wexford on October 10th, 1881. Mr. Parnell said: "He (Mr. Gladstone) would have you to believe that he is not afraid of you, because he has disarmed you, because he has attempted to disorganize you, because he knows that the Irish nation is disarmed so far as physical weapons go. But he does not hold this kind of language with the Boers. . . . Although he has attempted to regain some of his lost position with the Transvaal by subsequent chicanery and diplomatic negotiations, yet that sturdy and small people in the distant Transvaal have seen through William Ewart Gladstone, and have told him again for the second time that they will not have their liberties filched from them; and I believe that, as a result, we shall see that William Ewart Gladstone will again yield to the people of the Transvaal; and I trust that as the result of this great movement we shall see that, just as Gladstone, by his Land Act of 1881, has eaten his own words, and has departed from all his formerly declared principles, now we shall see that these brave words of this English Prime Minister will be scattered as chaff before the united and advancing determination of the Irish people to regain for themselves their lost land and their lost legislative independence." Well, gentlemen, I have said that I could point probably to almost any speech which has been delivered in recent times, up to the very meeting of Parliament, by Mr. Parnell in confirmation of the views which are expressed in the extracts which I have read to you. I ask you whether there is any man among you who believes any settlement of the Irish question will be permanent—(cries of "No")—which does not yield the full demands of Mr. Parnell, which does not enable him to "break the last link which holds Ireland to Great Britain," which does

not give him full control of the land of Ireland, and does not make Ireland absolute master of its own legislative independence? (hear, hear.) We have heard, in the course of the discussions in the House of Commons, the argument used that if we do not concede the wishes of the Irish people, as expressed by their representatives in Parliament, we shall have once more an outburst of outrage and violence in Ireland, and that even here in England we shall be subjected to the nefarious proceedings of assassins and dynamiters. That is a cowardly (loud cheering, and cries of "Bravo!" which were twice renewed) and a mean argument, and it ought not to be addressed to Englishmen by Englishmen; (cheers, and a voice—"Who said that?") but I only refer to it in passing in order to point out to you that the argument applies equally to any proposal which does not meet the full demands of Mr. Parnell; it applies to any proposal which does not give to him the absolute legislative independence of his country.

A Reactionary Measure.

Let us then proceed to consider how far the Bill, which is before us, for the better government of Ireland fulfils the conditions which Mr. Parnell has laid down. Only if it fulfils those conditions can you or I hope that it will be a permanent settlement. If it be not a permanent settlement, we shall very soon have the Irish problem upon us again in all its complications, and in all its difficulties—ay, into the distant future. Now, what is the proposal? The proposal is—That there shall be established in Dublin a Parliament representative of the Irish people (applause and hisses). At the same time it is proposed that Ireland should be deprived of all representation in the English Parliament (hear, hear, and no, no). I am speaking of the Bill. Some gentleman says, "No." If he has read the Bill, he will find that I am perfectly accurate (laughter, and hear, hear). By the Bill it is proposed that all representation of Irishmen in the Imperial Parliament shall cease. Henceforth Ireland is to have no part in the foreign and colonial affairs of this great and mighty Empire, which Irishmen have done so much to build up (hear, hear). It is to have no share

in the control of the army and navy, to which Ireland has given so many brave and valiant sons. It is to have no part in any matter relating to trade or navigation, and to a number of minor matters which henceforth are to be decided, so far as Ireland is concerned, in the Parliament which will then, indeed, be a foreign Parliament, since not a single Irish representative will find a place in it. Well, that is not all. This Imperial Parliament is henceforth to be sole judge and arbiter in the matter of all taxation concerned with excise and customs (hear, hear, and a voice—"So it ought to be"). It is to fix the amount and character of that taxation. It is to deal with three-fourths of the taxation revenue of Ireland, and the Irish people are to have no voice at all (shame). Does my friend in the gallery say that that is as it ought to be? (cheers.) Does he call himself a Liberal? Does he pretend to be a Radical when he approves of a system which would tax the Irish people to three-fourths of the whole revenue of the country, and give them absolutely no representation in the Parliament which levies these imposts? (cheers.) But the Bill does more than this. It imposes on the Irish people a Constitution which, I venture to say, is absolutely odious and hateful to every true Liberal (hear, hear). It would be repudiated with scorn in this country (cheers). It is contrary to all the practice, to all he principles, of our representative government. There is to be an assembly with two orders. Life peers are to be *ex-officio* members of that assembly; a third of the body are to be elected with a property qualification, and by electors who are also to have a property qualification (shame), and then this privileged minority of one-third of the new assembly is to have an absolute veto for a limited time over all the proceedings of the majority of popularly elected representatives. Surely this is an extraordinary arrangement to be proposed by a Liberal to a democratic Parliament. Why is it so proposed? Because, it appears that these safeguards and restrictions are necessary under the scheme of the Bill to give protection to minorities, who cannot otherwise be trusted to a popularly elected Parliament in Dublin. Now, gentlemen, I ask you seriously, as sensible men, do you believe that an arrangement of that kind

is going to be permanent? (cries of "No.") Do you believe that that is a final settlement of the question—(no)—between Ireland and Great Britain? Do you believe that any free people worthy of the name would submit for long to such miserable restrictions upon their liberty and their representative authority? (cheers.) Let me bring it home to you by a domestic illustration. Suppose we were considering in this room to-night the desirability of conceding local government to Birmingham, and suppose that the proposition made to us were that we might have a Town Council to govern our local affairs, provided that, in the first instance, we gave up our Parliamentary representation; that, in the next place, we were to allow the whole of the borough rate and half of the improvement rate to be settled as to its amount and to be collected by Sir William Harcourt, as Chancellor of the Exchequer (laughter). Suppose we were asked to leave the defence of our families and our houses to a police force governed by Mr. Childers as Home Secretary (hear, hear). Suppose that if any difficulties arose between us and neighbouring local authorities we were expected to see them decided, without reference to us, by Mr. Stansfeld, as President of the Local Government Board. Suppose, then, that the Town Council was to include amongst its members magistrates as *ex-officio* life-members (laughter). Suppose that aldermen were elected by £20 householders, and were required to possess a heavy property qualification. And suppose, lastly, that this privileged minority had a veto given them on every Act and every resolution which might be passed by their popularly elected colleagues. I ask you whether you would not resent such an offer as an insult (cheers). You would not pick it up from the gutter (cheers). You would do anything rather than submit to such a degradation (hear, hear). But then, gentlemen, under those circumstances, how is it that there are some people who are sanguine enough to suppose that the Irish nation will accept a precisely similar arrangement as a final settlement of their claims for legislative independence (hear, hear). It is ridiculous (cheers). If these proposals are accepted at all they are accepted only as an instalment (hear, hear). They will be a justification for further demands. You have

not to consider these safeguards and restrictions; you have to consider whether you will accept what will undoubtedly follow when these restrictions and these safeguards are removed, and Ireland becomes an independent and a foreign country, and the integrity of the Empire becomes an empty name (hear, hear). I do not know whether you have seen the speech which was delivered last night by Mr. Davitt at a public meeting. I have for Mr. Davitt the greatest respect. I believe him to be a man —a really honest and sincere patriot (hear, hear), who has been led into this agitation by his knowledge of the privations which his poorer countrymen have endured (hear, hear), by his desire to raise them to a higher level. In all that he has done, not perhaps in all his methods, but in his objects, I have the deepest and the most earnest sympathy (hear, hear). But Mr. Davitt, speaking last night, said that he had been asked whether Irishmen would be satisfied with these arrangements, and whether they would accept them as a permanent settlement of the question. He said that was as unreasonable as to ask him after he had had his breakfast to refrain from demanding his dinner and his supper (cheers). I sympathise with Mr. Davitt (laughter).* But, gentlemen, do not be led astray (hear, hear). It is not the breakfast alone that you will concede if you accept these proposals; you will have very shortly a demand for the dinner and the supper (hear, hear). And, believe me, you will not be able to resist it (hear, hear).

How the Bill affects Great Britain.

I have hitherto spoken of this Bill entirely from the point of view of Irish interests. Now look at it for a moment from the point of view of the interests of the United Kingdom (hear, hear). What is going to happen under this brand-new Constitution? Suppose, unfortunately, we get involved in a war with a great continental power. You may think that that is improbable. But remember it was only a few months ago, under

* Mr. Davitt has since written to the papers to say that this illustration did not apply to the present situation, but had reference to the position of Irishmen after the Land Act of 1881.

the leadership of the present Prime Minister, who I verily believe is a most ardent lover of peace (cheers), more anxious than any Prime Minister that has preceded him to avoid international complications, yet, even under his pacific leadership, we were on the eve of a great struggle with Russia (hear, hear), which might have strained the resources of the Empire to the uttermost.

If that happens again, where shall we be; what will be the position of the various members of the so-called United Kingdom? England may be struggling for its very existence; it may be in the throes of death; but Ireland will be unconcerned (cries of "No" and "Yes"). I am speaking only of the Constitution (hear, hear). Under the new Constitution she will be unaffected. No call can be made upon her for assistance or for aid. She will have no voice in the policy which has brought us into conflict; she will have no part in the contest itself; she will have no share in the pecuniary burdens which it may involve. She is asked to provide a fixed contribution that is settled upon a peace estimate of the cost of the army and the navy. When that is provided, her responsibility will cease; she will have no further obligation, no further concern. Well, that may be all right. These are the new ideas. But it is inconsistent, in my judgment, with what we have always been taught by the leaders that we have hitherto followed and revered (hear, hear). In the manifesto which Mr. Gladstone addressed to the electors of the United Kingdom at the time of the General Election, he laid down conditions which in his judgment were paramount and which must be fulfilled before any concession could be made of local government to Ireland. These conditions were—the union of the three kingdoms and the integrity of the Empire to be preserved (hear, hear); that the supremacy of the Crown and the supremacy of Imperial Parliament should be maintained (hear, hear). I confess I have looked at this matter over and over again, and Heaven knows I have desired, if I possibly could, to find ground of agreement with the leader whom hitherto, at any rate, I have always loyally followed (cheers). I say I cannot admit that the conditions laid down by him are fulfilled by an arrangement under which, in the case

of a great war, Ireland, although perhaps subject indirectly to the consequences of the struggle, would yet have no part whatever in the contest, no share whatever in the burden which it might involve.

THERE ARE TWO NATIONS IN IRELAND.

There is one other point which I wish to put before you in reference to the Bill for the better government of Ireland. In the debate on the introduction, my friend Sir William Harcourt (laughter), in a speech which was very witty, very amusing, and very good-tempered, said, among other things, that he thought he detected an Orange flavour in the arguments which I used (laughter). Well, I do not think—no man knows himself—but I do not think that I have any sympathy whatever with bigotry (hear, hear), whether it is exhibited by the Orangemen of the North or by the Roman Catholics in the South (hear, hear). But, on the other hand, I cannot blind myself to the facts of the situation. We have been accustomed, perhaps a little too much, to talk of Ireland as if it were one people. There are two nations in Ireland (hear, hear), two communities, separated by religion, by race, by politics, by social conditions. There are in Ireland at this moment something like one and a quarter million of Protestants, most of them in the province of Ulster, a great number in Dublin, and others scattered up and down the country in little groups, everywhere marking their existence by becoming the centre of honest, praiseworthy industry and enterprise (cheers). This minority—it is not a small one (hear, hear), it is one quarter of the whole population—through good repute and evil repute has been loyal to the British connection (cheers). It has been industrious, and it has been prosperous. Now, they are bitterly opposed to this scheme, and, rightly or wrongly, although under the protection of the British Government, they have lived on terms of amity with their Roman Catholic neighbours, they believe that their property, their religion—ay, even their lives—could not safely be trusted to a Nationalist Parliament in Dublin (cheers). Well, for my part, I hate coercion, and I am not disposed to coerce these men by British soldiers (hear, hear, and cheers).

I am not prepared to disregard altogether their wishes and their feelings (hear, hear). I think that they are entitled to some consideration from the British power that they have hitherto uniformly supported (hear, hear). We are asked now to pledge the credit of the British nation to the extent, as I shall show you directly, of 150 millions (hear, hear) for the benefit of the Irish landlords (oh, and shame), who, as Mr. Gladstone himself has shown in the speech which he made in introducing the Land Purchase Bill, have not always had a blameless record in the past. We are told that this enormous liability is a duty laid upon us by the misdeeds of our ancestors —that it is an obligation of honour ("Not at all"). But, then, is there no obligation of honour to this great Protestant minority of one and a quarter millions, who, at all events in recent times, have never committed any act of oppression, who have never lent themselves to violence or disorder (cheers), whose patient industry has contributed more to the prosperity of Ireland than all the agitators that ever lived (loud cheers), and who even now are giving, in the shape of taxation, in the shape of enterprise, in the shape of all that can come from enlightened citizenship, as much as all the rest of the population put together? (cheers.)

A Bad Bargain.

I pass on to consider briefly the provisions of the Land Purchase Bill, to which I have already had occasion to refer. We are told that this Bill is inseparable from the other—that it is an essential part of the policy of the Government (hear, hear). Why is it inseparable? Because Mr. Gladstone and the Government feel that they cannot in honour leave the interests of a small minority, who have become objects of dislike to a considerable portion of the population, to a popularly elected body (hear, hear). But if that is so, I confess I do not see why other minorities are not also entitled to protection (hear, hear). There is the Protestant minority, of which I have already spoken; there are the commercial classes; there are the large farmers—any section of the population which for any reason has become an object of envy or dislike ought not to be handed over without security to the control of a triumphant majority, as to which

even those who propose to invest them with this almost unlimited power are obliged to confess their apprehensions and their suspicions. But I want to consider this second Bill rather from the point of view of the British taxpayer (hear, hear). I ask you—you, the representatives of a great industrial community, many of you earning your livelihood by the toil of your own hands—are you willing to pay this vast price for the repeal of the Union? (loud cries of "No.") Are you ready at this time of depression, when, for my part, I can see no rift in the clouds, are you willing to anticipate the resources of the country, which may yet be wanted at no distant date to relieve the misery of a suffering people? (hear, hear.) Let us look at two points of the greatest importance. What is the liability in which we are asked to involve ourselves? What is the security which we are asked to take? What is the liability? I was very glad the other night to hear Mr. Gladstone say that, after considering the objections which I had urged while I was in the Cabinet, he had come to the conclusion that it was desirable to limit the liability, and that he had accordingly reduced the amount of consols to be issued from 113 millions to 50 millions. I was very glad, I say, to hear that; but I have been thinking it over ever since, and the more I think of it the more I am convinced that the reduction is perfectly illusory (hear, hear). The reduction is not owing to any alteration of the plan of the original Bill to which I objected. It is a mere alteration of the paper estimate (hear, hear), of the amount which may ultimately be called for. I think I can make that clear to you. Mr. Gladstone offers by his Bill an option to every landlord in Ireland to sell his land on certain terms. If the landlords accept, it will not be 50 millions, nor 113 millions; it will be at least 150 millions (hear, hear). It is quite true that the Bill only proposes a present issue of 50 millions of consols, but the liability will remain (cheers). Parliament will be called upon hereafter to do honour to the obligations of the nation, and if more is required more will have to be found (hear, hear), and whether it is £5 that is wanted or five millions, or 150 millions, will not depend, if this Bill is passed, upon us, upon Parliament, upon the English and Scotch people—it will depend upon a few

hundred landlords in Ireland (hear, hear). If they accept the option, we are pledged, and we cannot escape from the obligation (hear, hear). I do not know whether they will accept it or not; I do not know whether they will think it a sufficiently advantageous offer. I should, if I were in their place (laughter). But one thing I am certain of, and that is, that if only a part of them take the option we shall have all the worst bargains.

And now let us look at the security for this operation. The security in the long run is the willingness and the ability of the people to pay the rents. Well, the payment of rent in Ireland has lately been rather—(laughter)—a spasmodic performance; and really I do not see that it is probable or reasonable to expect that tenants will pay on a scale estimated at twenty years' purchase of the present rent at a time when their leaders are telling them, and have been telling them for years, that five years', or three years', purchase would be ample for the value of the land (hear, hear). I think they are still more unlikely to pay, when they remember, or when somebody reminds them hereafter, that it has been fixed by a foreign authority, by the Parliament at Westminster, which at the same time has admitted its incompetency to deal with other Irish affairs. But that is not all. If you like to be hopeful, if you are more sanguine than I am, you may believe that the tenants will be willing to pay these rents extorted from them by the decision of the Parliament at Westminster, and against the opinions of all their trusted leaders. You may believe that, but then comes the question, will they be able to pay them? These rents are fixed upon the basis of the judicial rent. The judicial rent was established before the recent reduction in produce. I am told that the reduction amounts to 20, 30, and 40 per cent. I do not believe we have touched the bottom; I believe the reduction will go on. If the English farmers were sensible enough to open the ports of the kingdom to the cattle from the United States, to take them as store cattle, that would at once involve an enormous reduction in the price that is now being paid for Irish cattle, which alone are allowed to be introduced into the kingdom for that purpose at the present time. Well, if that reduction goes on, if it continues, as I anticipate it will, I believe

there are many cases in which it will be impossible for the tenants to pay the existing rents; and then what would happen? Whether it be because they are unwilling, or whether it be that they are unable, it is not the landlord who will suffer. He will be spending the income, derived from British consols, in London or Paris, at his fancy and according to his will. But the Irish Parliament, elected by these tenants, existing by their breath, will certainly be called upon, and cannot fail to repudiate the English tribute, and to refuse to pay more than a proportion, at any rate—if it pays anything—of the sum which is required as the interest and sinking fund of the debt that will have been created. And then what is your remedy? Working men of England and Scotland, where is your remedy? You will be Irish landlords (laughter). You will have to evict the tenants; you will have to collect your rents at the point of the bayonet. I refuse to be a party to any such contingency (loud and continued cheers). Gentlemen, British credit, built up as it has been by past generations, is a precious reserve, to be held for times of need and necessity, and I will not anticipate it for the benefit of Irish landlords (cheers). We also have a land question in England (cheers). There is a land question in Scotland (cheers), there is a land question in Wales, and I am inclined to maintain these resources for cases which, I think, may be even more urgent and more deserving than those of the Irish landlords (cheers).

Opposition to Land Bill Absolute; to Home Rule Conditional.

Gentlemen, these differences which I have endeavoured briefly, but I hope clearly, to explain to you, have compelled me to resign the office which I held in the Government (a voice—"It will not be for long"). If you will believe me, I made a great sacrifice (cheers) in giving up the opportunity that I thought I held in my hands to carry forward some of the questions in which I have felt a deep interest (cheers). I might, perhaps, have had the honour of introducing a Local Government Bill (cheers); of doing something to equalize the burdens of local taxation (hear, hear), which I think at the present time press

most unfairly on some classes of the ratepayers (hear, hear). I might have done something to extend that municipal government in which I have always taken so great a pride, and so deep an interest (hear, hear). And, at the same time, I had hoped to provide opportunities for a happier and a better existence for the agricultural labourers (cheers), who are at once the most numerous and the most necessitous part of our artisan population. All these things I have surrendered with the deepest pain and regret, but with a sense of overwhelming duty and obligation (cheers). Perhaps I may be allowed to add a word or two as to my present position (hear, hear). I am afraid that the opposition which I feel to the proposals contained in the Land Purchase Bill cannot be met. I think the Bill is a bad one. I would sooner go out of politics altogether than give my vote to pledge the capital of the country, and the future earnings of every man and woman in the United Kingdom (hear, hear, and cheers), in order to modify the opposition of a small class of Irish proprietors to a scheme which, if it remains in its present form, will, I believe, infallibly lead to the separation of Ireland from England. I object in this case to the risk which we are asked to incur. I object also to the object for which we are asked to incur that risk (hear, hear). But as regards the Home Rule Bill, the Bill for the better government of Ireland, my opposition is only conditional (cheers). I regret very much that this great measure, involving so vast a change, such enormous risks,—so vitally affecting the welfare of the kingdom,—should have been brought before Parliament without more consultation with the other leaders of the Liberal party, and with the members of the Liberal party generally. I think the Bill would have benefited a good deal by fuller consideration, both in the Cabinet and in the country (hear, hear). But at the same time I admit that, having been introduced by so eminent a man as the Prime Minister, the question cannot be allowed to fall, the problem cannot be disregarded. The only question is as to the form which the Bill shall assume, and I think I can show you in a few words that if certain alterations were made all the anomalies which I have described to you, most of the objections which I have taken would disappear. If, to begin

with, the representation of Ireland at Westminster were maintained on its present footing (no, and applause),—if Irishmen were allowed to vote and to speak on all subjects which were not specially referred to them at Dublin, then they would remain an integral part of this Imperial realm; they would have their share in its privileges, and their responsibility for its burdens (applause). In that case the Imperial Parliament would be able to maintain its control over Imperial taxation in Ireland, and for all Imperial purposes the Parliament at Westminster would speak for a United Kingdom (hear, hear). I should like to see the case of Ulster met in some form or other. I would be glad if it were found possible to concede to Ulster, having regard to the great distinctions which I have pointed out of race, and religion, and politics—I would be glad if there could be conceded to Ulster a separate assembly (cheers). And if these changes were made I think it would be altogether unnecessary to maintain that long list of restrictions and safeguards, and minority representation, and curious electoral devices, which we have long ago repudiated in our own representative system (cheers). I am told by some of the more ardent advocates of the Bill that these are matters for committee. No, gentlemen, they are matters which clearly affect and would modify the principle of the Bill. I am only a young Parliamentary hand (laughter), but I have experience enough of the House of Commons to know that if we go into committee without having secured some assurance from the Government that these or similar amendments will be accepted by them, we shall be beaten hopelessly in detail on every point by the superior force which the Government will in that case be able to bring against us. I hope, I sincerely hope, that Mr. Gladstone (cheers), who, I have no doubt, has all these matters fully before him—I hope, I say, that he will see his way to accept these modifications. If he does, it will be with real gratification and delight that I shall be found once more giving him whatever humble support I can (cheers). But if not, then my duty is clear, and at all hazards I will perform it (loud cheers). I am not going to enter any cave; I am not going to join any coalition—(cheers)—of discordant elements and parties; but, in

the case I have mentioned, I shall give an independent—but I hope also a perfectly frank and loyal—opposition to the measures, which in my heart and conscience I believe, in their present form, would be disastrous and dangerous to the best interests of the United Kingdom (cheers).

Gentlemen, I have completed the statement which I undertook to make to you. I do not know whether you will agree or disagree with the views that I have expressed; but I think that, knowing me as you do, at least I may be sure that you will appreciate the motives which have guided my action. If I have been fortunate enough in the past to win your confidence and support, it has been because you have known that I have been faithful and true to the trust which has been confided to me; and you would justly despise and condemn me now if, for the sake of private interests and personal ambition, I were false to my convictions, and disregarded what I believe to be the vital interests of my country (loud cheers). There are some people, no doubt, whose convictions and principles sit so lightly upon them—(laughter)—that they can swallow them with ease—(laughter)—whenever their disappearance becomes convenient (laughter). But, for my part, I prefer to seek example and precedent in the life of the great leader to whom, for the first time, I am now opposed. In the course of his illustrious career—(cheers)—Mr. Gladstone has on more than one occasion found it necessary to separate himself from a Government whose policy he could not conscientiously approve (hear, hear), and I am well assured he would be of all men the last to condemn in others the consistency which on similar occasions he had himself so honourably maintained (loud cheers).

HOUSE OF COMMONS, June 1st, 1886.

THE FATE OF THE HOME RULE BILL—REJECTION OF THE SECOND READING.

[The discussion on the Bill having shown a powerful body of hostile opinion within the Liberal ranks, it was evident that the measure would be lost unless the strength of this opposition could be weakened. A meeting of the party was accordingly held at the Foreign Office, and Mr. Gladstone announced certain alterations in the proposals of the Government, especially with regard to the continued representation of Ireland at Westminster. These alterations were considered at a meeting of Radical Unionist members, and being generally thought to be inadequate, it was decided to vote against the second reading. In announcing this decision Mr. Chamberlain took the opportunity to put forward an alternative scheme on the lines of the Canadian Constitution.]

MR. SPEAKER, in resuming the debate upon this measure, I shall endeavour, as far as possible, to avoid any barren repetition of arguments with which the House is already familiar. I hope it may not be necessary for me to occupy the time of the House at any very great length, and I must ask those hon. members who, in the course of the discussion, have devoted a considerable portion of their speeches to personal references to myself to excuse me if upon this occasion, at all events, I do not reply to them. Those personal references, some of them humorous, as in the case of my hon. friend the member for Northampton, and some of them very bitter, may tend to relieve the monotony of the debate, but I think they are below the level of the great constitutional discussion in which we are called upon to take part—for, Sir, it is a great controversy in which we are now engaged (hear, hear). It has been admitted by the Government that these proposals are the gravest and the

most startling that have been presented to Parliament during the life of the present generation. On the one hand, we have the Government honestly and sincerely believing that they will bring about a final and friendly settlement of the difficulties which have existed for centuries between Ireland and Great Britain, and which have acted so injuriously to the interests of both countries alike. That, Sir, is a settlement which may well evoke passionate enthusiasm, and to accomplish which effectually would be the crowning glory of an illustrious career. On the other hand, Sir, those who oppose this measure believe with equal honesty and equal conviction—(hear, hear)—

A Fatal Step—

that it forms an irretrievable and fatal step, which will lead to animosities more dangerous than any with which we have hitherto had to deal, which will destroy the influence and power of the United Kingdom, which have been so often exerted to promote the freedom and civilization of the world, and which will postpone indefinitely measures of domestic reform and progress if the complications which we anticipate should unfortunately result from this legislation (cheers). I do not say now which of these alternative hopes and fears have the better foundation. All I ask my hon. friends to admit is, that at least the decision which we are called upon to take is one of momentous importance, and that no man can rid himself of his responsibility in this matter to form and to act upon an independent judgment altogether without reference to any personal consideration (cheers). There has been in some quarters a desire to minimise the importance of the decision which we have to take. We have been told that the Bill is dead, and almost in the words of Shakespeare, we have been asked to—

> "Vex not his ghost; oh, let him pass! He hates him
> That would upon the rack of this tough world
> Stretch him out longer."

We are advised that under these circumstances to vote for this dead Bill will be only a matter of form, that it may be treated

either as a vote of confidence in the Government or as a vote upon an abstract resolution, defining and accepting the principle of the Bill, but not committing us in the slightest degree in our action upon any other measure which may hereafter be presented. I do not think that the Government, I do not believe that the Prime Minister, would accept a vote upon that understanding, or upon these conditions. The Government have had two courses before them. They might, if they had seen fit, have withdrawn this Bill altogether, and they might have submitted a resolution affirming the principle, in the language of the Prime Minister. If they had done that, I should have voted for the resolution without hesitation (Home Rule laughter). But at the same time I have to point out that, although for the time it might have united the party, still the result would hardly have been satisfactory. What is the principle of the Bill which we should have voted for by such a resolution, as it has been defined by the Prime Minister? It is the establishment of a legislative authority in Ireland to deal with exclusively Irish affairs.

THE PRINCIPLE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED.

Well, Sir, that is, as I have said, a principle which I could cordially accept; but it seems to me that that is very vague and indefinite, and would leave us all a very large discretion. A resolution of that kind would be consistent, for instance, with the establishment of a Parliament, like Grattan's Parliament, with a separate Exchequer, with separate customs and excise, and practically an independent and a co-ordinate legislative authority. On the other hand, it would equally, in my judgment, be consistent with the establishment of some system of national councils (derisive cheers from the Home Rule members), purely subordinate in their character, and with very limited and strictly defined powers of legislation. I say that a resolution of the kind I have named would be consistent with either hypothesis, and, as I have mentioned a national council, may I say one word in reference to the speech which was made late last night by the hon. member for Dublin City?

THE AUTHORSHIP OF NATIONAL COUNCILS.

I do not see him in his place, but he was on that occasion very severe on what he called my proposals for national councils as they appeared in an article in the *Fortnightly Review*, which, in the first instance, he attributed to me. Sir, the hon. member knows a good deal about that article. He knows who wrote it, and he knows that I did not (cheers). He knows that although I committed myself unhesitatingly to the principle of national councils, yet the details of the scheme were supplied to me from an Irish source, and the hon. member knows what that source was (cheers, and cries of "Name" from the Home Rulers, and a voice, "Say who it was"). At the time the article appeared the hon. member wrote articles in the *Freeman's Journal*, which he was good enough to send to me; and in those articles he gave to those proposals a much more cordial reception than he vouchsafed to them last night (hear, and laughter). And the hon. member, I believe, knows—and if he does not I will tell him—that I have irrefutable and incontrovertible evidence that those proposals at the time they were made received the approval and support of distinguished members of the Nationalist party (cries of "Name" from the Home Rule members, and from Mr. Healy, "O'Shea"). I have pointed out that such an abstract resolution as has sometimes been suggested would be capable of this diverse interpretation. But the second course which the Government have before them is the course which they have actually taken. They have asked us, in the words of the Prime Minister himself, to give a vote which he has always placed in contrast to an abstract resolution, and which must, therefore, be assumed to have more meaning than an abstract resolution would have—to give a vote in reference to a Bill before the House, from the principle and the purpose and the main outlines of which the Government have stated that they cannot possibly depart. Well, Sir, after the meeting at the Foreign Office the other day, some of us hoped that the Bill was dead (derisive cheers from the Home Rulers), and not only that it was dead, but that it would never be revived again in its present shape. We hoped that advantage would be taken of the interval which we expected would be given to recast and

remodel this measure. We hoped that that might be done, in view of the discussion which has taken place, and with the desire which I, for my part, believe the Prime Minister sincerely has to meet the wishes of many of his supporters and the objections which they have taken. If this had been the case, we might have abstained, at all events, from active opposition. We should have felt that we were absolutely uncommitted as to any new measure when it was brought before us; and if there were any reason to anticipate in October that we should be all once more in agreement, then we might have taken upon ourselves the responsibility (and it would have been a grave responsibility) of leaving this question in abeyance, in spite of the danger to public order and the distraction of all public thought and business which such a Bill would be likely to cause in Ireland (cheers).

THE HOPE OF AGREEMENT HAS VANISHED.

But if ever we entertained such a hope, that hope has vanished. Sir, the Prime Minister has just stated that he sees no inconsistency between the speech which he made in the House on Friday and the speech which he delivered at the Foreign Office. I listened to one of these speeches. I have read them both again and again, and I entirely agree that they both express precisely the same ideas and almost in the same language. Possibly, there may be a little development in the speech of Friday, but there is nothing in the slightest degree inconsistent with the speech on Thursday. And this is what I gather from those two speeches. In the first place, the Bill is not to be remodelled, and is not to be reconstructed. In the second place, the Bill is not dead; it is in a state of suspended animation, and it is to be reintroduced in October. In the third place, no changes will be accepted by the Government in the Bill which are inconsistent with the scope and purpose and main lines of the Bill. And in the last place, while the Bill itself is not to be reconstructed or remodelled, only certain clauses are to be reconstructed, especially the 24th clause, and that exclusively with reference to one point in the Bill—namely, the maintenance of the Irish representation. I believe I have stated almost the exact words of the Prime Minister. It is

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clear to my mind that any one who now votes for the second reading of this Bill will be logically and honourably committed to vote for the second reading of a similar Bill, or of the same Bill if it should be reintroduced in October next (cheers). And not only so, but he is committed to something more than the principle of the Bill as it has been defined by the Prime Minister. He is committed to the main lines—that is to say, the general plan of the Bill (no, no, and cheers). Well, this is the view I take. I cannot understand what the "main lines" of a Bill mean if they do not mean what I stated. My right hon. friend the Prime Minister said at the Foreign Office: "Of course, we should have the advantage of considering any other method which might appear useful, and it is very possible that that might aid in carrying out the principle and the purpose of the Bill and its main lines, from which I cannot hold out any expectation of our departing" (Mr. Gladstone—"Outlines," and Home Rule cheers). I see I made a slight mistake (laughter from the Home Rulers), but I think the alteration will go far to confirm the impression which I have already stated. I said "main lines"; it should have been "outlines," but the word "outlines" still more clearly defines, in my view, what I think the Prime Minister had in his mind—namely, that if you commit yourselves to the second reading of this Bill, you are committed to the general scope and plan of the Bill. It does not mean that you are committed to all the details of the Bill, or to all the clauses, but the Bill affords a method of carrying out the principle, and you are committed to the outlines of that method by voting for the second reading. If that is the state of the case, what is our position? We have to consider—I hope I have considered with a due sense of the responsibility attaching to every member who has to vote on this question—whether the alterations which the Prime Minister has offered to us to meet our objections in regard to this one point of the Bill do cover those objections. Those alterations have entire reference to the question of the maintenance of Irish representation in this House.

A Charge of Inconsistency.

And here I must just turn aside for a moment to notice a

remark which was made in the very eloquent and interesting speech of my hon. and learned friend the Attorney-General. I listened to that speech with a great deal of delight and interest, but there was one point in it to which I take exception. He accused me of inconsistency in this matter, because he said that in 1874 I advocated the exclusion of Irish members from this Assembly (Home Rule cheers, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor—"So you did"), whereas now I am urging their retention. Well, Sir, that is an entire mistake (no, no). I never in 1874, nor at any other time, advocated the exclusion of Irish members from Westminster; and I will tell my hon. and learned friend how this mistake has arisen. I was then engaged in the General Election at Sheffield. My right hon. friend the President of the Board of Trade stood against Home Rule, I in favour of it. He won the seat, and I lost it (laughter). Well, Sir, in the course of that campaign I had to make, I think, about thirty speeches, and I had to answer, as the custom is at Sheffield, hundreds and hundreds of questions; and it is upon a misreported answer to one of these hundreds of questions—(Home Rule laughter)—that the misapprehension of my hon. and learned friend has been founded. But any one who cares to go back to this ancient history will find the whole tenour and gist of all my speeches were in favour of the federal system, on the lines, though not committing myself to the detail, of Mr. Butt's proposal; and as everybody knows Mr. Butt was a strenuous advocate of the full and complete representation of Ireland in the Imperial Parliament (hear, hear). The mistake was merely in the report of an answer to a question, not a speech; and how the mistake arose I cannot say at this distance of time, but I am absolutely certain I never said anything of the kind (hear, hear). I hope that will clear me of any charge of personal inconsistency (cheers, and cries of "No" from the Home Rulers), although really it is a very small matter. I do not think it is necessarily political virtue that a statesman should be absolutely consistent, because I should admit that it is very often the duty of a statesman to alter his opinions in altered circumstances; but as a matter of fact, my record is clear in this matter. I have always held the same language on this Irish question that I hold to-day,

and it does seem to me a strange thing that some of my hon. friends should be so anxious to convict me of inconsistency and of having changed an opinion which I expressed twelve years ago, when there is hardly one of them to-day who holds the opinions which he entertained less than twelve weeks ago (cheers and laughter).

Importance of Representation at Westminster.

Well, Sir, why do we lay so much stress on this point of the representation of Ireland? That is not a merely technical point. We have always laid stress upon this, because we have said the effect of the Bill was that it not only created a Parliament in Dublin, but destroyed the Imperial Parliament at Westminster. We have said, and maintain, that the retention of the Imperial Parliament in its present form and authority is necessary for the unity of the Empire, and that without the representation of Ireland you cannot have a Parliament at Westminster which will exercise anything like an effective or authoritative supremacy. We are anxious for the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. I put this to hon. gentlemen opposite. I do not think they agree with me. But let them bear in mind that this is the issue raised by this Bill. If they do not want the Imperial Parliament to be supreme, they are right in voting for it. If they do want it to be supreme, they will fail of their purpose (Opposition cheers).

Mr. Gladstone's Testimony.

I want to read a passage from the speech of the Prime Minister. I am not going to impute to him the slightest inconsistency. I believe he has never wavered the least himself in reference to the language I am going to quote; and I believe he would speak now in exactly the same words. I only quote them because they express in better language than I could command the idea I wish to convey. The speech was delivered at Dalkeith in December, 1879. The right hon. gentleman says: "One limit, and one limit only, I know to the extension of local government. It is this. Nothing can be done, in my opinion, by any wise statesman or right-minded Briton to

weaken or compromise the authority of the Imperial Parliament, because the Imperial Parliament must be supreme within these three kingdoms" (cheers; Mr. Gladstone—"Hear, hear"), "and nothing that creates a doubt upon that supremacy can be tolerated by any intelligent and patriotic man (Opposition cheers, and "hear, hear," from Mr. Gladstone). That exactly expresses the opinion I hold, and which I want to impress upon the House. But is there any man here who can maintain that this Bill does not weaken the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament—does not throw doubt upon it? (no, no, from the Home Rule members, and Opposition cheers.) I hear some hon. gentlemen opposite say "No." Well, I challenge them to get up in this House or in Ireland and say they are in favour of the continued existence of the real supremacy of the Imperial Parliament—(Home Rule cheers)—as it exists at present (Home Rule cries of "No," and Opposition cheers). Ah!—(laughter)—now the House sees what hon. members want. They are not in favour of the supremacy as it exists at present. But what my right hon. friend said was that he would not weaken that supremacy (cheers), that he would not throw doubt upon it. (Mr. Gladstone—"Hear, hear," and cheers.) But they want to weaken it and to throw a doubt upon it (Home Rule cries of "No," and Opposition cheers), and they only support this Bill because they believe it does these things (Home Rule members—"Oh, oh," and Opposition cheers.) I read carefully the able speech of the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. I imagine that he put the constitutional question as well as it was possible to put it, and even to the uninstructed mind of a layman his doctrine seemed to be perfectly clear and conclusive. If the Prime Minister had said that he did not wish to abolish the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, the answer of my hon. friend would be complete, for the supremacy is not abolished. It still remains —what shall I say?—as a constitutional figment (Opposition cheers). But we want it to be a real, effective supremacy. We do not want the supremacy of the British Parliament to descend to the level of the suzerainty of the Porte over Cyprus (Opposition cheers). The Under-Secretary told us that the supremacy of Parliament existed over colonial legislatures. Yes, Sir; but

dare we exercise it, say upon the criminal, agrarian, religious, or educational matters of any self-governing colony? We know that if we did so that colony would at once throw off its allegiance. Are we going to reduce Ireland to the position of a self-governing colony, subject to a constitutional supremacy which becomes a sham, which we dare not exercise? That is the question which lies at the root of our desire that Irish members should be retained at Westminster. Under these circumstances I am not surprised that hon. members opposite should object to it.

THE CHANGES PROMISED DO NOT MEET OUR OBJECTIONS.

Well, now, Sir, do the amendments which my right hon. friend has indicated meet this view? My right hon. friend has not put before us his plan, but he has indicated it sufficiently for our purpose. He said at the Foreign Office that he had already promised the House that on questions of taxation Irish members would be invited to take their part in our deliberations. The word was "invited." Afterwards he said that with regard to Imperial affairs, and the subjects which are known as reserved subjects, he would apply the same principle as in the case of taxation. Now, I shall be corrected if I have misstated the intention of the right hon. gentleman, but what I understand is that the idea of the Prime Minister was that in some way or other, more or less formal, Irish members are to be invited to debates in which they take an interest, and to be allowed to come here and share our discussions. If that is the proposal, it seems to me an unsatisfactory one. It would make the Imperial Parliament a periodic and spasmodic body. It would have no continuous existence, and I cannot see how the Irish people can be asked to take their share in Imperial obligations if the attendance of their representatives were governed by any plan of this kind. Let us judge it by our own experience. First let me take one or two examples. Many members will recollect all the circumstances attending the vote of credit in the Russian difficulty. I take it that, if such a proposal in similar circumstances should again be made, the Irish members would be invited here to help us pay the

bill. But that is not enough. They would have the right, if they are to pay any share of the expenses, to have their part in the discussion of any question which may by any possibility arise with reference to this matter, which may help to develop the policy that made the expenditure necessary. Take the question of Egypt, which occupied too much of our time during the last Parliament. The Irish members frequently took part in our debates. The question of Egypt was always with us; and how could Irish members take their fair share in discussing such a policy unless they were continually and permanently present? (Opposition cheers.) In these circumstances, how could we preserve the supremacy to which I attach so much importance? The Imperial Parliament would be a fluctuating body, with a large section of its members imperfectly informed on the subjects which they were called upon to decide, and at the same time they would have no adequate authority to deal with the general business of the United Kingdom.

Two Conditions Essential.

There are two conditions necessary for maintaining, without weakening or throwing doubt upon it, the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. The first is that Irish members shall have their full, complete, and continuous representation in this House; the second, that the local legislative body or bodies to be created shall be admittedly from the first subordinate bodies (Opposition cheers). If they are co-ordinate and equal, you cannot have supremacy. Equality denies supremacy by the etymological meaning of the word. Local bodies must be, therefore, distinctly subordinate. What is the opinion in Ireland on this subject? I have here an extract from *United Ireland*, which I believe is edited by the hon. member for South Tyrone. It is a very interesting paper, although its language is occasionally rather strong. But in an article headed "No Surrender" the writer says:

"The proposal to withdraw the Bill either before or after the second reading is absolutely out of the question. It would be a defeat more disastrous than could by any possibility be sustained in the lobbies. The proposal to strike out the clause

excluding the Irish members from the Westminster Parliament is no less inadmissible. We are ourselves firmly persuaded that when the question is thrashed out in Committee, and when Englishmen really understand how the duplex Irish Parliamentary power would work in practice, they will marvel how any Englishman could be insane enough to propose to keep Irishmen omnipotent at Westminster as well as at Dublin, and to place in their paths all sorts of temptations to use their omnipotence vexatiously."

I quite understand the candid statement of the writer of that article; but what we want to prevent, and will not allow if we can help it, is that Irishmen should be omnipotent either at Westminster or at Dublin (loud Home Rule and Opposition cheers). Now, I come to another question of great and cardinal importance.

ULSTER.

That is the question of Ulster (Home Rule laughter). I say this is a question of cardinal importance for this reason. Irish members have said they would rather have no Bill at all than a Bill which did not give them power to subject Ulster—(Home Rule cries of "No, no,")—to the domination (Home Rule cries of "No," "Withdraw," and "Who said it?")——

The SPEAKER.—I must ask the hon. member for South Londonderry not to interrupt. Gentlemen from that quarter were listened to with great patience, and every member of this House is entitled to be listened to with patience (cheers).

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—Which did not place Ulster under the power of the dominant majority at Dublin, and which did not give the Dublin Parliament power to tax Ulster. I can quite understand that (laughter). I can quite understand that a Dublin Parliament without the power to tax Ulster might find itself in financial difficulties (laughter). But the question is whether it is fair to Ulster. I am not going to say anything about the armed resistance—(Home Rule laughter)—which has been threatened in Ulster. I know nothing about it. We have heard that these threats have been made before, and that they have not been followed by anything dangerous, and very likely it will be the same thing again. The other day the hon. member for Cork actually got up in the House and accused

me of incitement to assassination and outrage (laughter and cheers). No charge could possibly be more absurd or ridiculous (hear, hear). I have not said a word, either in speech or writing, about physical violence in connection with this measure. I only notice the statement of the hon. member for Cork to express the satisfaction with which I find him denouncing even the most shadowy and imaginary incitements to violence and outrage (Opposition cheers). Well, Sir, what I want to ask the House is this: if the resistance of Ulster is expressed in the usual constitutional way, (Home Rule laughter), or if resistance of a portion—and an important portion—of Ulster is expressed in the same way to any proposal for submitting them to a Dublin Parliament, will you override it, will you ignore it? I say you ought not (Opposition cheers). Now, I listened the other night to the speech of my right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board, and really there have been so many good speeches made from the Treasury Bench in this debate that I do not know to which to give the palm (hear, hear); I admired his speech very much, although there was one passage in it the interpretation placed on which I think he should regret. I will read the exact words of my right hon. friend. He said:

"I regard it as about the most weighty and condemnatory testimony that could be borne that our former rule of Ireland has led now, at this moment, to the existence of a portion of the Irish people so divided from the rest, so hostile, so unsympathetic, so unbelieving, that no spark of Irish patriotism, as it would appear, is kindled in their breasts by the prospect of being permitted, under this system of autonomy, to contribute thus directly to the prosperity and progress of their country."

Sir, why are the Protestants of Ulster stigmatized by my right hon. friend as unpatriotic and unsympathetic? Why, because they are proud to belong to a greater country (loud cheers, and Home Rule laughter); because they claim a continued share in the autonomy of the United Kingdom in which they now have a part; because they cling to the traditions and the history of the United Kingdom, which is just as much their

possession and heritage as it is ours (Opposition cheers); because they refuse to be cast adrift and cut away from the hopes and associations which they have hitherto cherished (loud cheers, and Home Rule laughter). I suppose if my right hon. friend had been a Frenchman he would have denounced the people of Alsace and Lorraine as unsympathetic and unpatriotic when they refused to be reunited to Germany, and when their hearts turned towards the great country from which they were forcibly separated (cheers). I suppose if he had been an Italian he would have denounced those members of the Savoyard community who did their utmost to prevent the transfer of their country to France; and loyalty must indeed be at a discount when a passionate allegiance to the unity of the kingdom—(ironical laughter from the Home Rulers)—is made a moral offence and crime by a Minister of the Crown (Opposition cheers)..

THE RELIGIOUS DIFFICULTY.

Sir, I was told the other night by my hon. and learned friend the Attorney-General that I had been fanning the flame of religious bigotry (Home Rule cheers). Well, if it can be shown to me that I have done that, I should say that I am heartily ashamed of it (a Home Rule Member—"So you ought to be"). But what is the ground of this accusation? It is that in a letter which I wrote I said that the Ulster people feared, and I thought with much reason, that their material and religious interests would suffer if they were subjected to the dominance of a Parliament in Dublin.

MR. W. O'BRIEN.—If they were handed over bound hand and foot.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—That will do just as well (laughter). I daresay I used both expressions, but if they were subjected to a dominant Parliament in Dublin, perhaps it comes to the same thing as the more allegorical expression "bound hand and foot," and I should have thought that a writer so practised as the hon. member for Tyrone would have known that there is not much practical distinction between the two. That is the ground of the accusation. Now, is it a fact that the Ulster

Protestants do fear for their material and their religious interests? There is no doubt whatever about it—(cheers)—in my mind or of any man who reads the papers or attends public meetings, or knows anything at all about the state and condition of Protestant Ulster. But was I right in saying they had some reason for it? Well, I belong to an extreme section of the Liberal party (cries of "Oh, oh," from the Home Rulers), and have all my political life joined with those who would destroy every shred of religious ascendency, by whatever sect it may be claimed. But then I think that gives me and those who think with me the right to protest against the substitution of one form of religious ascendency for another; and I say that the Catholic Church, by its tenets and by its faith, is bound not to be content with equality (cries of "Oh" and "No" from Home Rulers), but to demand predominance (Opposition cheers). Hon. members from Ireland think not. I will give them an authority for it (laughter and cheers). Here is a pamphlet written by the Prime Minister in 1875 on Vaticanism. The Prime Minister said then that "to secure rights has been, and is, the aim of Christian civilization; to destroy them and to establish the resistless, domineering action of a purely central power is the aim of the Roman policy" (hear, hear). That is true, and if it were worth while to carry the argument further, I could quote the statements of Catholic bishops recently made and to the same effect (Home Rule cries of "Quote"). The House will appreciate the interruptions which come from a certain quarter of the House, and which do not augur very well for the peace and order of the Dublin Parliament (laughter and cheers). I say, then, that as far as concerns their religious interest the Protestants of Ulster have a right to fear a Parliament in which Catholics will be in a majority, and in which, if they are true to their creed and faith, they will endeavour to establish Catholic supremacy (Opposition cheers). But have they any ground to fear for their material interests? Well, I saw the other day that Mr. Davitt had been interviewed by the reporter of an evening newspaper. Mr. Davitt was asked upon this question of Ulster, and this is what he is reported to have said: "Just leave them

alone to us, and we will make short work of these gentry. They are not Irish, but only English and Scotch who have settled among us, and it is preposterous that they should be allowed to dictate to Irishmen how Irishmen should be governed."

MR. DILLON.—I am sure the right hon. gentleman does not wish to do injustice to Mr. Davitt, and I would ask him whether he is aware that Mr. Davitt has absolutely and publicly contradicted that statement, and repudiated it and stated in the same newspaper that he never said one word of it? (Home Rule cheers.)

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—I am much obliged to the hon. member opposite. I had not seen any contradiction, else I need not say I should not have quoted those words. At the same time—well, I will not say it (laughter); I accept the contradiction. I pass on to another point. I have myself seen articles in a Nationalist newspaper which attacked the linen industry. Last night the hon. member for South Dublin spoke of the linen industry in pathetic terms as an industry suffering great depression. He ought to have rejoiced, because the Nationalist papers are denouncing the linen industry of Belfast as the curse of the country (Home Rule cries of "No, no"). I have seen a series of articles in which those words are used—the linenites are denounced as the curse of the country, and the linen industry of Belfast is described as an Orange industry. All I can say is that as long as these articles are written and these views expressed I am not surprised that the people of Ulster look with some dread to the anticipation of a Parliament in which such sentiments will be represented, and to which their interests will be subjected (cheers). But, after all, the question is not whether these fears are well founded or the reverse. They exist, and the question is, are you going to give effect to them?

A SEPARATE TREATMENT OF ULSTER.

What did the Prime Minister say upon that subject? It is rather a long quotation, but the importance of it justifies me reading it to the House. In his speech on the introduction of the Bill my right hon. friend said:

"Various schemes short of refusing the demand of Ireland at large have been proposed on behalf of Ulster. One scheme is, that Ulster itself, or perhaps, with more appearance of reason, a portion of Ulster"—

I just stop here to say that I have been accused of using the words "Protestant" Ulster, and it appears to have been thought that I intended to convey that the whole of Ulster was Protestant. What I meant was to limit my remarks to a portion of Ulster—to that portion which is chiefly entitled to consideration, as being inhabited generally by a Protestant population, and the Prime Minister seems to have the same idea—

"A portion of Ulster should be excluded from the operation of the Bill we are about to introduce. Another scheme is that a separate autonomy should be provided for Ulster or for a portion of Ulster. Another scheme is that certain rights with regard to certain subjects—such, for example, as education and some other subjects—should be reserved, and should be placed, to a certain extent, under the control of provincial councils. These, I think, are the suggestions which have reached me in different shapes; there may be others. But what I wish to say of them is this—there is no one of them which has appeared to us to be so completely justified either upon its merits or by the weight of opinion supporting and recommending it as to warrant our including it in the Bill, and proposing it to Parliament upon our responsibility. What we think is, that such suggestions deserve careful and unprejudiced consideration. It may be that that free discussion, which I have no doubt will largely take place after a Bill such as we propose shall have been laid on the table of the House, may give to one of these proposals, or to some other proposals, a practical form, and that some such plan may be found to be recommended by a general or predominating approval. If it should be so, it will, at our hands, have the most favourable consideration, with every disposition to do what equity may appear to recommend."

Sir, that statement was perfectly satisfactory to me. I always thought the question of Ulster an open question, and I have never made it a question that should decide my vote on the second reading. But I think the time has come when the

Government may give us some further information. I should like to ask them whether or not they have convinced themselves that there is in Ulster, or any portion of Ulster, inhabited by an intelligent and energetic population, such a predominating sentiment as deserves separate consideration; and whether in that case they have devised, or will devise, a plan for giving that favourable consideration which the Prime Minister promised (cheers).

No Hope of Finality.

'I pass on to other points which I shall deal with very briefly, but which raise a rather important question—I mean the points connected with the financial proposals of the Bill, and also those clauses which deal with the protection of minorities. Now, I have criticised those clauses on a previous occasion, and I have laid myself open to the very fair remark of the Prime Minister, that in doing so I am more Irish than the Irish themselves, since I complain of what they approve, or, at all events, do not oppose. I want, however, to point out this—that I have directed attention to this matter, not with the slightest desire to relieve hon. gentlemen opposite of provisions to which they are indifferent, but because, unless we can be certain that this scheme will be satisfactory to the Irish people, not merely to those representatives who may be here to-day, but to the Irish people—there is no hope of that finality which we are promised in connection with this legislation (cheers). Now, surely that is a very important point. To my mind it is of superlative importance, and I really think, much as I dislike this Bill, if I could have honestly convinced myself that it was to be accepted as a final settlement—I do not mean absolutely, but practically for our time—I believe I should have voted for the Bill, bad as I think it to be. But I do not think there is any finality about it (cheers). On what grounds can the House be expected to believe that this measure is a final measure? Only on two grounds. The first would be that the provisions of the Bill are so favourable, that the more the Irish people know of them, the greater their practical acquaintance with them, the more they would like them, and the less likely would they be to change them.

The second ground would be that although the provisions of the Bill were not altogether satisfactory, yet, having been loyally accepted by the representatives of Ireland, the people of Ireland would consider themselves bound by the decision of their representatives. Now, is that so? Let us see as to the first ground. Are the terms so satisfactory to the Irish people that they would become more and more enamoured of them as times goes on? I was much struck with the remarks of the member for Inverness in his well-reasoned speech (hear, hear). One sentence caught my attention particularly. It was when he said if this Bill were offered to the people of Scotland they would reject it (hear, hear, and murmurs). Is there any Scotch member who will get up and deny that? (hear, hear.) I do not believe that this Bill would be looked at in Scotland—(cheers)—as a settlement of the national question; and that is a very remarkable thing, because when we are told that this Bill is a concession to national sentiment, remember that the national sentiment exists more strongly and in a more intense form in Scotland than in any other part of the United Kingdom (no), and, if I may say so without offence to the Irish members, with greater reason, because Scotland has been an independent country, separate and homogeneous, well able to take care of itself for centuries, while Ireland was a dependent province. Well, the national sentiment of Scotland would not be conciliated by this Bill. The people of Scotland do not wish to dissociate themselves from the policy, obligations, and responsibilities of the Empire; but the people of Scotland would be content—their national sentiment would be satisfied—by concessions much less extravagant than those contained in this Bill, which would give a local autonomy to Scotland, and preserve unquestioned and undoubted the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. The second point is, have the Irish members loyally accepted the provisions of this Bill? (yes.) Well, I am not certain that they have accepted all the provisions of this Bill. I think they have made some very important reservations. But suppose, in order to obtain the greater object, they yield these matters, suppose they come

down here and tell us—which they have not done yet—that they accept this Bill as a final settlement, and that then they find that the people of Ireland are not satisfied. I ask the hon. member for Cork, can he bind the people of Ireland to accept his leadership if he accepts this as a final settlement of the question between Ireland and Great Britain? I am now going to quote the hon. member for Cork, and I must say the hon. members from Ireland opposite are the most unfortunate people in the world, in that they always seem to be badly reported (loud laughter). But on this occasion I have furnished myself, not only with the words, but the place, the time, and the paper, which is the authority for the report, and I hope the hon. member will find that I am quoting him correctly. He was speaking at Cork on January 21st of last year, and he is reported in the *Freeman's Journal*, which I suppose is a friendly newspaper. He said:

"We cannot ask for less than restitution of Grattan's Parliament (loud cheers), with its important privileges and wide and far-reaching constitution. We cannot under the British Constitution ask for more than the restitution of Grattan's Parliament (renewed cheers), but no man has the right to fix the boundary to the march of a nation (great cheering). No man has a right to say to his country, 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther,' and we have never attempted to fix the *ne plus ultra* to the progress of Ireland's nationhood, and we never shall (cheers). But, gentlemen, while we leave those things to time, and circumstances, and the future, we must each one of us resolve in our own hearts that we shall at all times do everything that within us lies to obtain for Ireland the fullest measure of her own rights."

These are very eloquent words, and they do credit to the head and heart of the hon. member; but what hope is there of finality in these words? (cheers.) Is this Bill Grattan's Parliament? Remember Grattan's Parliament is the *minimum* for which the hon. member thought he was entitled to ask in January, 1885. This is not Grattan's Parliament, and it is nothing like it; and the hon. member, unless he gets up now and denies that that is his opinion, is precluded by that speech from pretending that this Bill is a final measure

(hear, hear). Well, there is another speech on November 3rd, at Mayo, and it is reported in *United Ireland*. He said:

"Speaking for myself, and I believe for the Irish people, and for all my colleagues, I have to declare that we will never accept, either expressly or implied, anything but the full and complete right to arrange our own affairs and make our land a nation, to secure for her, free from outside control, the right to direct her own course among the people of the world (loud and prolonged cheering)."

Again I say, very eloquent. It may be very right, but it is not in this Bill. This is not a final measure, under these circumstances, if the hope of finality is to be grounded upon the statements of the hon. member opposite (cheers). I have one other quotation which I commend to the notice of some of my Liberal friends near me. This was a speech delivered at Wicklow, on October 5th, 1885. I take the report from *The Times*. It is a verbatim report, and unless *The Times* reports him much worse than it does me, I do not think he has much cause to complain (hear, hear).

"I claim this for Ireland, that if the Irish Parliament of the future considers that there are certain industries in Ireland which can be benefited by protection, which can be nursed by protection, and which can be placed in such a position as to enable them to compete with similar industries in other countries by a course of protection extending over a few years, that Parliament ought to have power to carry out that policy. It is not for me to predict the extent to which that power should be used, but I tell English Radicals and English Liberals that it is useless for them to talk of their desire to do justice to Ireland when with motives of selfishness they refuse to repair that most manifest injustice of all—namely, the destruction of our manufactures by England in times past, when they refuse to repair that injustice by giving us the power which we think would be sufficient to enable us to build up those comparatively few industries which Ireland is adapted by her circumstances to excel in."

Now, Sir, what does this come to? So far as the hon. member for Cork is concerned, unless he has changed his opinion, it is perfectly useless for English Radicals and English

Liberals to give him this Bill unless they are prepared to go further and give him the control of customs and excise, to enable him to build up special industries by protective duties (hear, hear). Upon this question of finality I want to say a word upon a matter which has been referred to very often in this debate. It is most important and interesting as an illustration.

Canada a Warning.

I refer to the case of Canada. It is curious that in the case of Canada you can find a precedent for almost every point which has been raised in the course of this debate. The Prime Minister referred to the case of Canada, and I think I state his argument correctly when I say that he considered the condition of Canada in 1838, before the rebellion, might be looked to as analogous to the condition of Ireland now; it was a condition of great discontent and of agitation which culminated in actual rebellion. Then he went on to say that the reforms granted to Canada had produced the pacification of the country, and I think, in his mind at all events, he compared the reforms of Lord Durham with the present Bill, and he argued that it would do for Ireland what Lord Durham's reforms did for Canada. Now that, I think, was the position of the Prime Minister. But I confess—having read very carefully the history of that time by more than one authority—that I think it points to a totally different conclusion. My view I will state in a sentence. My view is that Lower Canada—I will not deal with Upper Canada, which is another matter—was really in 1838 in very much the same condition as Ireland will be if this Bill is passed, and that the reforms of Lord Durham are the further reforms which we shall have to grant after this Bill is passed in order to secure the pacification of Ireland. What was the position of Lower Canada? It was a country inhabited by two peoples—two races—of two religions. The great majority were French Catholics, and there was a very energetic, strenuous minority of British settlers who were Protestants. There was a constitution under which Canada contributed nothing to Imperial expenditure, and had no part in Imperial policy. There was a constitution which gave Canada a legislative assembly

which was returned by the majority, who were the dominant party in it. There was a legislative council which was curiously analogous, not exactly in detail, but in effect, to the first order in this Bill, and which was a nominated council, nominated in order to secure the representation of the Protestant minority and give them an effective veto over the proceedings of the popular and legislative chamber. That was the state of things, and that is curiously like what the state of things would be in Ireland under this Bill. The revenues of Canada were of three kinds—taxes levied previous to 1774, taxes levied after 1774, and there were the hereditary revenues of the Crown. Canada had power only over the taxes since 1774, and the first complaint made, as it would be the first complaint under this Bill, was that the Canadian Legislature was not entrusted with the control of its own finances. A demand was made to the British Parliament that they should give up to the control of the Lieut.-Governor all taxes which had been levied previous to 1774. That demand was extorted from the British Parliament under the threat of rebellion and agitation. But the concession of that demand did not stop the agitation. The Canadians went on demanding the control of the hereditary revenue, and, in fact, the full control of the whole revenues of the provinces, and they asked for more—they asked that the Legislative Council should be done away with, that it should be made elective and elected practically under the same conditions as the popular body, and in fact that all the arrangements for the protection of the minority should be done away with. Now that is exactly parallel to what I anticipate under this Bill. You will have to give to Ireland all the reforms granted after Lord Durham's Act; you will have to give them their practical independence, because there is no use denying the fact that at this moment the self-governing colony of Canada is practically independent. The Dominion Parliament has only to pass a resolution desiring to cast off its allegiance, and there is not a man in this House who will hold up his hand against it. Therefore, we see, first, inadequate concessions, then a demand for greater concessions, then entire separation (Opposition cheers). It is a fatal decline. There is no finality in this Bill,

and until you come to separation you cannot possibly stop or satisfy the demands represented by those hon. members on the benches opposite.

CANADA A MODEL.

I have one other word to say about Canada. It has been made a constant demand upon us that we should produce a plan (Home Rule cheers). Yes, hon. members from Ireland opposite are very anxious indeed about the details of our plan. I paid attention to the demand made in this connection by the Prime Minister, and I endeavoured with great submission to suggest the alternative lines on which it seemed to me that we should have proceeded. The result was not very encouraging (Home Rule laughter). Our attempt to meet the wish which was expressed has been hailed with ridicule; we have been told that our plan is "Popkin's plan," and we are described as "puny whipsters" by the hon. and learned member for South Derry. It is all very well for the hon. member, with his magnificent physique (great laughter), to stigmatize as puny whipsters men not endowed by Providence with his great personal gifts (laughter), but it is very hard upon us that we should be accused of arrogance and presumption—("Hear, hear," from Mr. Biggar, and laughter)—and self-conceit because we endeavoured honestly—("Oh" from the Home Rule members, and cheers)—to meet the demand made upon us by the Prime Minister for an alternative scheme. But now I will give you our alternative scheme—(Home Rule laughter)—in even greater detail, though it will not add much to your information (laughter). You may find—I will not say the details—but the lines of such a plan in the present Constitution of Canada; not, however, in the relations between Canada and this country,—those are the wrong lines, and lines against which I protest, and which mean separation,—but in the relations *inter se* of the provinces of Canada and the Dominion Parliament. Those are the relations which I, for one, am perfectly prepared to establish to-morrow between this country and Ireland. Let us see what the differences are. In the first place, there is that question of Ulster. Some one in the course of this debate referred to the Constitution of 1840, which united the two provinces of Canada.

Yes, but the union did not answer; it led to quarrels, to agitation, to irritation, and even violence; and in 1865 the Constitution was changed and these provinces separated. Now they have each their separate autonomy, under the authority of the Dominion Parliament. In that way you might have provincial assemblies in Ireland, under the authority of the Imperial Parliament. Then, again, in the Dominion Parliament there is complete and continuous representation of every part of the Dominion. They are represented proportionately according to their numbers; they are represented continuously and fully. In the third place there is absolute and effective supremacy of the Dominion Parliament over the provincial legislatures. There is a veto which can be and is used; there is a right of concurrent legislation which can be and is used; and the provincial assemblies are subordinate bodies, with distinctly defined rights of legislation expressly given to them by statute. Those are great differences, but there is another difference, one of detail, but not of small importance—the legislation as to criminal law and procedure. Where does it rest in Canada? Not with the local assemblies, but with the Dominion Parliament (hear, hear). And the judges of the land, by whom are they appointed, and to whom are they responsible? They are appointed by the Governor-General, and paid by the Dominion Parliament (hear, hear). In that way the judges of Canada are independent, and are not likely to be affected by local influence, which might prevail in smaller and subordinate bodies.

Objections to the Bill Unchanged.

Well, Sir, I think I have occupied the time of the House long enough—longer than I intended, but I hope that, at all events, I have made my position clear (cheers). I do not want to be in the least mistaken by hon. members from Ireland on the benches opposite, or by any one else, as to the opinions I hold, and which are identical with those which I have written and expressed before on many occasions. It will appear to the House that my objections to the Bill as it stands are unchanged. I cannot see that the amendments which have been suggested by the Prime Minister would meet those objections in any con-

siderable measure; therefore I feel it my duty to vote against the second reading (cheers). We are threatened with a dissolution; a dissolution has no terrors for me (ironical Home Rule cheers). Of one thing I am confident, and I know something about the matter—that the Unionist majority in this House will be strengthened (loud cheers). I am very sorry that this Parliament, from which so much was expected, should have had but a brief and barren existence, but I am glad that this great issue, having been raised, is to be submitted to the only tribunal whose decision we can all accept and which is competent to pronounce it (cheers and counter cheers). We also appeal to Cæsar. I was told the other night by the hon member for the Irish ward in Liverpool (Home Rule cries of "Division")—I beg pardon, the Irish Division (laughter)—that the British democracy were going to give a unanimous vote in favour of this Bill. I do not recognise the hon. member as any authority on the British democracy; he may be an authority on the Irish democracy,—although I do not think that he resides very much in that country himself (laughter),—but for the British democracy he is not entitled to speak (cheers). There is one admission I will make. Two things have become clear during the controversy which has taken place: one is that the British democracy has a passionate devotion to the Prime Minister (loud cheers)—a devotion earned and deserved by 50 years of public service, and that sentiment is as honourable to him as it is to those who feel and express it (hear, hear). But there is another thing which has also come out—that is, the sentiment—the universality and completeness of which, I daresay, has taken many of us by surprise—in favour of some form of Home Rule to Ireland, which will give to the Irish people some greater control over their own affairs. On these two things I believe the British democracy is practically unanimous, but they are not unanimous as to the methods by which it has been sought to establish this principle. Any one who will look to the resolutions of Liberal associations, any one who will read the speeches of prominent Radicals and Liberals, will see that there is the greatest difference of opinion as to the particular provisions of this Bill, and hardly any one approves of it un-

reservedly. Most of them take the same objections which I have been urging. It is upon the method and plan of the Bill that we are going to the country, and not upon its principle (cries of "Oh" from the Home Rule members, and cheers). I have said before, and I say it again, give me the principle without the Bill and I will vote for it. But I will not vote for the method by which it is sought to establish the principle (cheers) But we are going to the country, and I hope that we shall go in a more amiable temper than has recently been displayed in some quarters.

A Personal Defence.

I have been myself assailed with extraordinary bitterness because I have exercised an independent judgment in a matter which I believe to be vital to the interests of the country. I have been told that I am animated by personal spite and private spleen (Home Rule cheers). Yes; I do not complain of hon. members from Ireland taking that view and expressing it—it is their habit of controversy (laughter and cheers). No one has ever been opposed to them in politics but he has been covered with virulent abuse and misrepresentation (cheers), and none more conspicuously than Lord Spencer and the Prime Minister (hear, hear), whom they are now loading with fulsome adulation. But I address myself to my hon. friends round me, from whom I have the misfortune to differ. I ask them to consider whether it is really necessary to impute the basest motives to public men at a time when there are on the surface reasons perfectly honourable which may sufficiently account for their conduct (hear, hear). Do you say—do you dare to say (Irish laughter)—that my right hon. friend and colleague in the representation of Birmingham is animated by personal spleen and spite? He takes the same course as I do; he is going into the lobby against this Bill and against the friend, the associate, and the leader whom he has followed with loyal devotion for many years of his life. My right hon. friend has done as great services, he has lived almost as long in public life, as the Prime Minister himself, and no one has doubted his honour (cheers). But you say that I am in a different position. And why do you say that? What I am saying now I expressed

in public—it is in print—before the General Election, before I was a member of the Government, before I had the slightest conception that any idea of this kind was fermenting then—if it were fermenting—in the mind of the Prime Minister. I spoke at Warrington in September, 1885, and, referring to the demands of the hon. member for Cork, I said then that if there were any party or any man who was willing to yield to those demands in order to purchase his support I would have no part in the competition (cheers). And then many of my friends whom I see around me thanked me in public for what they thought that plain, frank, and courageous declaration (hear, hear). And now, forsooth, for having made the same declaration some three months later, when the occasion has arisen, they accuse me of personal and unworthy motives. Sir, the charge is unjust and the charge is ridiculous. For there is not a man here who does not know that every personal and political interest would lead me to cast in my lot with the Prime Minister (cheers). Why, Sir, not a day passes in which I do not receive dozens or scores of letters urging me for my own sake to vote for the Bill, and to "dish the Whigs" (laughter). Well, Sir, the temptation is no doubt a great one, but after all I am not base enough to serve my personal ambition by betraying my country (cheers); and I am convinced that when the heat of this discussion is passed Liberals will not judge harshly those who have pursued what they honestly believed to be the path of duty, even although it may lead to the disruption of party ties and to the loss of the influence and power which it is the legitimate ambition of every man to seek among his political friends and associates (loud cheers).

A MANIFESTO.

June 11th, 1886.

[The second reading of the Home Rule Bill was defeated by a majority of 30. Mr. Gladstone moved that the House adjourn till the following Thursday. On that date (June 10th) he announced that the Government had advised Her Majesty to dissolve Parliament without delay, and had received her assent to that advice. Mr. Chamberlain then issued the following address to the electors of West Birmingham.]

GENTLEMEN,—The new Parliament is about to dissolved under circumstances unparalleled in the history of the country.

Before the last General Election, in September, 1885, Mr. Gladstone, as the leader of the Liberal party, issued a Manifesto, in which he formulated a policy for the consideration of the electors. In this Manifesto, which was universally accepted by Liberal candidates, the Prime Minister indicated four subjects of primary and urgent importance, and requiring immediate attention. With regard to these he said: "The work is ready, and the workmen—the Liberal candidates—await the commission to proceed, which the constituencies alone can give."

In the same Manifesto Mr. Gladstone dealt with the question of Ireland at some length. He pointed out that Ireland was greatly in arrear of England and Scotland in the matter of Local Government, and he advocated the grant of enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs to different portions of the United Kingdom, subject to well-defined conditions for maintaining the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the Empire, and the necessary authority of Parliament.

The views thus expressed were generally approved, and, in the course of subsequent speeches, Mr. Gladstone insisted on the importance of securing a great majority, in order that the Irish question might be dealt with without reference to the

Irish vote, and he seriously and solemnly declared that if the Liberal party depended on Irish support for its majority it would not be safe to enter on the consideration of the great Constitutional question of the government of Ireland. Under these circumstances, it does not appear to have entered into the mind of any Liberal candidate that within a few weeks of the assembling of Parliament he would be invited to consider a vast revolution in the relations between Great Britain and Ireland, and to accept proposals which have been condemned in advance by every Liberal statesman during the present century.

The election was fought and won on the programme formulated by Mr. Gladstone, and on collateral issues of purely domestic interest. It was affected by the controversy as to the Established Church, by the question of National Education, and by the proposals for the improvement of the condition of the agricultural labourers; but the Liberal party, with rare exceptions, repudiated emphatically the demand of Mr. Parnell for a separate Irish Parliament, and refused to purchase the Irish vote by tampering with the unity of the Three Kingdoms.

What the leader of the Liberal party in last November solemnly and seriously declared to be unsafe, the Prime Minister has now deliberately undertaken. The manifesto to the electors of Midlothian has been laid aside. No attempt has been made to deal with any of the principal subjects declared in that programme to be ripe for legislation.

The Government, which came into office on a resolution calling for immediate legislation for the benefit of the agricultural labourers, has made no effort to fulfil its pledges, and the Parliament elected to deal with these questions will be summarily dismissed, because by a great majority of English and Scotch representatives it has refused to accept proposals entirely novel and unexpected, and unsupported in their integrity by any section of the House of Commons outside the Government and those members of the Irish party whom a short time ago Mr. Gladstone described as "marching through rapine to disintegration and dismemberment of the Empire, and even to the placing of different parts of the Empire in direct hostility one to the other."

The authority of the Prime Minister has been sufficient to work this startling transformation; but even this great authority must not be allowed to blind us to the vital issues raised by the Irish Bills, and to the fatal and irretrievable consequences of the legislation now proposed.

The Irish Government Bill would repeal the most important provisions of the Act of Union. It would set up a rival Parliament in Dublin, with large powers of legislation and administration, and with an executive resting entirely on its support. Such a body, by the necessity of the case, would be compelled to assert its independence of external control, and would be the source of constant irritation and agitation until the full demands of the Separatist party had been completely satisfied. No effective guarantees could possibly be taken for the protection of the minority, for the security of property, or for the rights of conscience. The judges of the land and the whole system of criminal legislation would be under its control, and the entire Executive Authority of the country would soon be concentrated in its hands.

At the same time, it is proposed that the full and continuous representation of Ireland in the Imperial Parliament shall cease and determine, and that the effective discussion and supervision of foreign and colonial policy now exercised by the representatives of all parts of the United Kingdom shall give place to some system of occasional and periodic delegations, while the obligation and responsibility of Ireland for Imperial affairs are limited to a fixed and inadequate contribution towards the peace establishment of the army and navy.

Such an arrangement, while leading inevitably to a complete separation, affords no example for meeting the just and intelligent demands of Scotland and Wales for a more effective control over their domestic business, coupled with the full recognition of their place and share in the Imperial system.

But great as are the objections to the Government plan from the point of view of Imperial interest, they are at least equalled by those founded upon the true interests of Ireland itself.

In 1881 Mr. Gladstone said: "Our opponents are not the

people of Ireland. We are endeavouring to relieve the people of Ireland from the weight of a tyrannical yoke." To-day, and in disregard of this utterance, the Government invite Parliament to hand over the whole people of Ireland—the loyal population of the North, as well as the inhabitants of the southern provinces—to a government which will represent almost exclusively the policy of the National League. Against this transfer of their allegiance the majority of the people of Ulster strenuously and even passionately protest. Under the Union they have lived and prospered. By race and religion and character they are more closely allied to their fellow-subjects in England and Scotland than to that portion of the Irish people at present represented by the followers of Mr. Parnell. They dread the consequences of a separation, which would leave them at the mercy of a party whose principles they reject—whose policy they have constantly resisted—and whose methods of agitation they regard with abhorrence.

To desert these men, whose only crime in the eyes of the Separatists is their pride in the greater country of which they form a part and their loyalty to the British connection, would be an act of ingratitude and cowardice unworthy of any nation.

They do not, however, stand alone in their opposition to the repeal of the Union. In every county and district in Ireland are to be found a minority of Protestants in isolated groups and scattered congregations, who are filled with alarm at the prospect now open to them, and who regard with the most serious apprehension the possible withdrawal of the British authority, which has hitherto shielded their industry and protected their rights and fortunes. The proprietors of land, the commercial and professional classes generally, and the whole of the Civil Services of the Crown, unite in protesting against a change which would make the members of the National League the unquestioned arbiters of their fate.

But while all these classes have equal grounds for apprehension, there is only one of them for which the Government Bills attempt to make adequate provision.

The landlords are the subject of exceptional consideration, and it is an "inseparable part" of the Government policy to

offer to them at the risk of the British taxpayer the opportunity of escaping from the consequences of the proposed legislation. The offer is made to every landlord—that is, to a few thousand individuals out of a population of nearly one and a quarter millions of Protestants whose interests are injuriously threatened. But in aid of this specially favoured class British credit is to be pledged in the first instance to the extent of fifty millions sterling, and subsequently to the amount of probably not less than 150 millions. For this vast sum, the expenditure of which in other directions might transform the face of the country, and bring comfort and happiness to millions of the labouring poor, the only security will be the rents of Irish holdings to be collected under the authority of the Irish Parliament. If these rents are excessive, if the tenants are unable or unwilling to pay them, they can only be collected by a body whose existence and power are dependent on the tenants themselves. In such a case the ultimate loss must fall on the already over-burdened British taxpayer, who must bear the consequences of an arrangement in which he has no direct interest. The sole justification of these proposals is to be found in the distrust felt, even by the author of the Government of Ireland Bill, of the new legislative authority which is to be created in Dublin. I share this distrust, but I extend it to the case of other classes besides the landlords, and I find the only remedy to be in the maintenance of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament over the whole of the three kingdoms, and not in the attempts to buy out, at the cost of the British taxpayer, a small minority of the persons who may be injuriously affected, and those, perhaps, not the most deserving nor the most necessitous.

I am firmly convinced, then, that the proposed Irish legislation ought not to receive your sanction. I disapprove of it because I believe that the existence of a separate and practically independent Parliament in Dublin will be dangerous to the unity, and even to the safety, of the United Kingdom, and that by the complications to which it will give rise, its establishment will indefinitely postpone the great measures of domestic reform which we all earnestly desire to forward. I oppose this legislation also because it is unacceptable to all the most

intelligent, the most enterprising, and the most loyal portion of the Irish people. I am convinced that it will injuriously affect the prosperity of the country, and I fear that it will lead to disorder and civil strife.

I object, lastly, to these proposals because they will lay an unprecedented liability on the British taxpayer—not for the benefit of the Irish tenants, but in order to purchase the compliance of the Irish landlords. You have been told that the Act of Union was obtained by shameful corruption; I trust that you will be unwilling that an Act of Separation should be procured by the most gigantic bribe ever offered to the opponents of any legislation.

It remains to consider the question of alternative policy. It has been stated by the supporters of the Government Bills that their rejection will be followed by outrage and violence in Ireland and elsewhere; that they offer a final and favourable settlement of the Irish question, and that the only alternative is coercion of a more stringent and persistent character than has ever yet been exercised in the government of Ireland.

All these allegations are open to grave objection. It is not necessary to assume that the defeat of these hastily considered and imperfect measures will lead to any exceptional disorder. They do not appear to offer the least hope of a final settlement, but are, on the contrary, more likely to afford additional cause of violent and irritating controversy; and, lastly, while deprecating the extreme measures which in past times have been adopted to repress discontent in Ireland, I cannot admit that the due enforcement of just laws can be properly described as coercion. It is to be hoped that the spirit and intention of the British nation, and its firm desire to do justice, will be appreciated in Ireland, and that no section of the population will encourage violence and disorder; but, in any case, the duty of every civilized Government is to maintain the law, which is the safeguard of liberty and the security for the lives and properties of the humblest citizens as well as of the most exalted.

While, however, it is necessary that the authority of the law should be upheld, it is equally important that all subjects of reasonable complaint should be removed.

Although most of the long-standing grievances of Ireland have now been dealt with in a generous spirit, there are still matters calling for the early attention of the Imperial Parliament.

It is generally admitted that the Land Act of 1881, like its predecessor, the Land Act of 1870, is imperfect, and requires amendment. There is a consensus of opinion that it is desirable to increase the number of owners of land in Ireland, and I believe that this object, conservative in the best sense of the word, can be attained without risk to the British taxpayer, and with great advantage to the occupying tenants of Ireland.

A greater and more pressing question remains for solution. Ireland is much behind the rest of the United Kingdom in its system of local government, and the necessity for a great extension of local control of local affairs is recognised as a necessary consequence of the extension of the Parliamentary franchise. Liberal Unionists, while determined in their opposition to the establishment of a separate Parliament for Ireland, are, nevertheless, anxious to meet, as far as possible, the legitimate aspirations of the Irish people, shared, as they believe them to be, by Scotland and by Wales, for greater independence in the management of their local affairs.

In this connection the objects to be kept in view are:

1. To relieve the Imperial Parliament by devolution of Irish local business, and to set it free for other and more important work.
2. To secure the full representation of Irish opinion on all matters of purely Irish concern.
3. To offer to Irishmen a fair field for legitimate local ambition and patriotism, and to bring back the attention of the Irish people, now diverted to a barren conflict in the Imperial Parliament, to the practical consideration of their own wants and necessities. And, lastly, by removing all unnecessary interference with Irish Government on the part of Great Britain, to diminish the causes of irritation and the opportunity of collision.

To secure these objects it will be expedient to establish a complete system of popular local government, alike in its main features for England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.

But beyond and above a purely municipal organization of this kind, I believe that a larger arrangement will be found safe and desirable, under which, subject to the concurrent and supreme authority of the Imperial Parliament, the various portions of the United Kingdom shall be enabled to exercise a greater influence over local administration and over legislation for their special needs and requirements. Such an arrangement, involving a delegation, but not a surrender, of power, and in which the subjects referred to local assemblies would be strictly defined, would probably be sufficient to satisfy the national aspirations of Scotland and Wales. The national aspirations of Ireland are not stronger nor more entitled to sympathy than those of the other nationalities which form integral parts of the United Kingdom, and it may be hoped that the people of Ireland, once placed in the enjoyment of such great privileges, will prefer their possession to the tyrannical yoke from which in 1881 it was Mr. Gladstone's chief object to relieve them. The views which I have thus attempted to express were shared by many, I believe by the majority of Liberals, before the last election. It is now sought in some quarters to excommunicate all who are unable to repudiate in a few months the opinions and convictions of a lifetime. We have fought in the ranks of the great Liberal army; we have shared in its labours, and rejoiced in its victories; we remain faithful to our professions and our pledges; and we now appeal to our fellow Liberals to give a full, impartial, and independent consideration to the new issues for the first time submitted to them.

No one has recognised more strongly than myself the claims of Party, and the duty incumbent on all to sacrifice individual preferences to the necessity of united action; but I believe that in the present instance the danger is so great that all other considerations ought now to yield to the urgent necessity of securing the safety of the realm, and the true and lasting welfare of Great Britain and Ireland. Having acted

on this conviction, I await with respect the verdict of my constituents, and hope to retain the confidence and support of those whose interests I have loyally endeavoured to serve, and in whose midst my public life has been spent and my public work accomplished.

I have the honour to remain, Gentlemen,

Your faithful and obedient Servant,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL RADICAL UNION, June 17th, 1886.

UNIONIST ORGANIZATION AND POLICY.

[The division of opinion amongst Liberals upon the Irish policy of Mr. Gladstone's Ministry naturally found expression in the principal organization of the party, and at a meeting of the National Liberal Federation held in London in May, the proceedings led to the secession of many of its leading members. Shortly afterwards it was decided to form a new Radical Association, with the double object of opposing the proposals contained in Mr. Gladstone's Bill, and of promoting an alternative plan which would provide for a great extension of Local Government in Ireland consistently with the integrity of the Empire and the supremacy of Parliament, and which might with advantage be adapted to other portions of the United Kingdom.]

THE RIGHT HON. J. CHAMBERLAIN, M.P., who was received with applause, said: Gentlemen, this is really a formal meeting for a business purpose, and intended to inaugurate a new association. I am not certain that I ought not to apologise to you for venturing to make any lengthened observation on such an occasion. It is a meeting of Liberals and Radicals who find themselves unable to agree with the proposals of the Government with regard to Irish policy, but who yet are sanguine that some means may be found to satisfy the reasonable aspirations of Irishmen, Scotchmen, Welshmen, and Englishmen also, for a great extension of local government consistent with the security of the Empire, and the supremacy of one Parliament for the United Kingdom (hear, hear). I think I may venture to say for you, as for myself, that we are willing to accept Mr. Gladstone's statement of this great problem as it was presented by him before the last General Election, and that we agree with

the conditions and limitations which he affixed to any settlement of the question. If we differ from him now it is because we believe that in the Bills which he has introduced he has failed to have sufficient regard to the conditions which he himself desired to establish (applause), and, therefore, we think that it is now our duty, as Liberals, to endeavour to find some other and safer means for giving effect to the object we all have at heart. Well, we propose to found a new association on this basis; and the resolutions which will be submitted to you to-night will all have reference to this purpose. I do not think it is necessary for me to dwell at any length on the expediency of such an association.

A Protest against Intolerance.

I have seen, with some surprise, that objections have been taken in some quarters, on the ground that it will tend to perpetuate the differences in the Liberal party. I must say that that comes with a very bad grace—(hear, hear)—from those who, having already all the old organizations of the party, or nearly all, in their hands, are nevertheless forming Emergency Committees and Home Rule Associations (laughter), with the avowed object of contesting the seat of every Liberal Unionist, and of driving us from the party to whose success we have contributed in times past—(cheers)—at least as much, and perhaps a little more (renewed cheers), than those who are now assailing us as traitors and renegades (hear, hear). Well, against this intolerance we intend to protest—(hear, hear)—and to defend ourselves, and we consider that we have a right to form an association for this purpose. It will be one of our chief objects to maintain within the ranks of the Liberal party full representation of Unionist views on the Irish question. I am inclined to say that the course which some of the thick and thin supporters of the Government policy are taking is, at least, a very mistaken one. The Bill which was defeated the other day—(cheers)—was confessedly an imperfect one. The Government themselves admit that very large and considerable amendments must be introduced into it before it is again presented to Parliament; and yet these gentlemen, these emergency men,

are going to punish us to whom they owe it—(laughter and hear, hear)—that a bad Bill has been rejected, and that amendments will be introduced into it before it is again brought forward. They are attempting to make the question an entirely party issue: they say that it is one between Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone (no)—between the Tory and the Liberal party (no). But what will be the result of this? Just consider if they are successful what the result of such a course as they are taking will be to the Liberal party, and to the cause of progress and reform. In the first place, it will have the effect of compelling every man who distrusts this legislation, who is unable to accept it, and who puts his country before his party (loud cheers), of compelling him to join the ranks of his political opponents (hear, hear). And in this way, what we have hoped would be only a temporary separation, to be forgotten in a short time, when we might again re-unite for common work, would be a permanent parting of the ways.

A Plea for Independence.

That is not all. I think it will be a bad day for the Liberal party when it is understood that there is within its ranks no room for independent patriotism (cheers), and when its place is to be taken by a blind subservience to the party leader (hear, hear). But, in the second place, such a course as I have referred to would be fatal to all improvement in the plans of the Government. To whom do they owe the criticism which has already produced improvement and amendment? (A voice—"To you.") To us—to the independent Liberals—(cheers)—who have dared to have opinions of our own (hear, hear), and not to the servile followers of this Government, or any Government that happened to be in power (cheers), who have not dared to offer an independent judgment upon the proposal which has been submitted to them. I do not much wonder that the Irish Nationalist leaders, Mr. Healy and others, are gloating over the situation, and congratulating themselves that it is possible that all independent Liberalism may be crushed out, and that Mr. Gladstone will have a majority of absolutely devoted followers (A voice—"Lick-

spittles"), and that under these circumstances there will be no chance of any amendment, but that even the most extreme proposals of Mr. Gladstone himself—or perhaps of Mr. Parnell (hear, hear)—will be accepted without a word by the Liberal party. But, if this is to be the case, it will be better at once that we should confer a dictatorship either upon Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Parnell, and that we should not go through the farce of electing a Parliament, every man of which on the Liberal side is bound beforehand to accept whatever one or other of those leaders may dictate to him (cheers). But then it is said that in this situation we have only a choice between a policy of coercion and the proposals of the Government (A voice—"That is rubbish"), and that therefore it is right that all who dissent from the latter should be weeded out of the Liberal party. Well, I deny altogether that that really represents the situation (hear, hear), and I venture to submit to my fellow Liberals, very few of whom, either in this room or outside, approve altogether of the proposals of the Government, that there is a third course open to them—that is, to return a majority, a Liberal majority, strong enough to carry a good measure and a safe measure which will re-unite the Liberal party (cheers), but unable to ram down the throats of the minority a proposal which they think to be dangerous and impracticable (hear, hear). The only chance of a good measure is that in the ranks of the Liberal party there shall be a sufficient number of men who have the courage of their convictions, and who are able to express them (hear, hear); and I do not doubt that if such a result be accomplished, Mr. Gladstone, who has shown in times past that he is perfectly ready to consider all opinions within his party, will recognise the division which has been created by his present proposals, and will find some means of avoiding that division in future.

The Alternative Policy.

And that brings me to the second great object of the new association which we seek to form. It will be our business to discuss and to advocate a policy upon this Irish question which may have some chance of re-uniting the Liberal party. You

know it has been part of the tactics of some of the supporters of the Government to challenge us throughout this discussion to produce an alternative plan. Those are the usual Parliamentary tactics of a Government—(hear, hear)—who having produced their own plan, and having found it unacceptable, also find it easier to criticise alternative plans than to defend their own scheme (applause). We might have replied to this challenge in the language of our leader himself; we might have said, as he did in my hearing in the early part of the session, when he was challenged in the same way by the Tory party, "the responsibility lies where the means of action lie. It is the Government alone who can act in such a matter." And in another part of the same speech he said he would avail himself of his privilege as an old member of Parliament to make a recommendation to the new members. "I would tell them of my own intention to keep my counsel and to reserve my freedom—(laughter)—till I see the occasion when there may be a prospect of public advantage in endeavouring to make a movement forward (renewed laughter), and I will venture to recommend them, as an old Parliamentary hand, to do the same" (continued laughter, and cheers). We might, I think, very fairly have accepted this advice and acted upon it (hear, hear). We might have pointed out the defects of the Government measure, we might have left to the Government, upon whom the responsibility lies, the duty of finding some better way of achieving their object; that would have been perfectly conformable to Parliamentary tactics. But we have thought that we owed something more to our constituents (hear, hear),—to the new democracy of the United Kingdom (applause),—and we have put aside all questions of tactics, and have ventured to lay before the country the main outlines of an alternative scheme (cheers). Well, we have suffered a good deal—(laughter)—for our disregard of the advice of "the old Parliamentary hand" (renewed laughter). We have been ridiculed and misrepresented (hear, hear). We have been told that our proposals are inconsistent; that they have been differently stated by different members of the party, and differently stated by the same members of the party at

different times (applause). We are told on the highest authority that they are halting, stumbling, ever shifting, and ever vanishing proposals (hear, hear). Now, will you allow me for a moment or two to examine that accusation. From whom does it proceed? From the supporters of the Government Bills. But, gentlemen, was there ever a case in which those who live in glass houses should be more careful not to throw stones? (applause.) Is the Government policy an unchanging and unchangeable expression—(no)—of a fixed and determined conclusion? (no.). Has that been always the same? (no.) Has that never altered? Why, it has not been the same for four and twenty hours (hear), and I defy any advocate of the Government Bills to say what it is at the present moment (laughter and cheers). We were told the other day by a distinguished member of the Cabinet that the great advantage of the Government Bill was that it was flexible (laughter). We have also been told that amendments will be welcomed and considered upon all the main provisions of the measure; and even its principle has been stated in terms so vague, and so indefinite, that they cover inconsistent and almost hostile propositions (applause).

Changes already made in Government Bill.

In the first instance, before I left the Government, the scheme of the Prime Minister included the absolute concession of all control of Imperial taxation in Ireland to an Irish local authority, that would even have power to establish protective duties against British manufactures (oh). After I left—I do not know at whose suggestion—that was abandoned; and then the control of three-fourths of the taxation of Ireland—the whole of the customs and excise—was left with the British Parliament, from which all Irish representation was excluded. That was the second phase of this great measure; and it appeared to some of us to be rather anomalous and inconsistent with Liberal principles. But when we made that objection we were told that this exclusion of the Irish representation was the very backbone of the measure; that without it it would collapse altogether;

that if it were abandoned the whole of the Bill would have to be reconstructed; that under these circumstances it was an essential feature of the measure; and that it passed the wit of man to distinguish between Imperial and local business. But a few days of discussion in the House of Commons brought about a further change; and then we were assured that what before had been stated to be absolutely impossible was perfectly practicable (laughter), and that the Government had a little plan by which they were going to bring back the Irish members to Westminster in some form of periodic and spasmodic representation (laughter). I can assure you that I do not impute any blame to the Government because they have from time to time changed their opinion on the matter, which they have had very insufficient opportunities of discussing (hear, hear), which is full of difficult and complicated detail, and upon which neither the country nor even the mass of the Liberal party had ever been consulted (hear, hear, and cheers). But I do protest against any charge of inconsistency—(hear, hear)—being brought against us by people who have never had a settled idea from one week to another—who have changed their policy almost as often as the sun has come round (laughter).

WHAT ARE THE PRESENT INTENTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT?

Even now I should like to ask some of the gentlemen who are met in the hall opposite whether they can state from their own knowledge what are the intentions of the Government with regard to some cardinal provisions of this great scheme of self-government for Ireland (hear); what, for instance, are the intentions of the Government in regard to the Purchase of Land Bill. It was the proposed introduction of that measure which, in the first instance, brought about my resignation of the office which I had the honour to hold in the Government (cheers). We have been told from time to time that it is an inseparable part of the Government policy, that the Government are pledged in honour to carry it through; and yet somehow it has strangely dropped out of sight. The advocates of that policy—the supporters

of Mr. Gladstone, right or wrong—say nothing about the Land Bill (hear, hear). There is not a word about it in the Prime Minister's latest manifesto (A voice—"He's afraid"). Again, what are the Government going to do with regard to the Protestant population of Ulster? (hear, hear.) That is a matter of the greatest difficulty and of the gravest importance. The Government appreciated the difficulty. They told us when they introduced the Bill that it was a subject reserved for further consideration. But now, after all this discussion,—after it has become sufficiently evident that the majority of the people of Ulster, at all events, will not willingly submit to the rule of a Parliament in Dublin,—we still find the Government without any conclusive policy, without any determined intention, and it appears as though this also were still an open question. As I have said before, I do not impute blame to the Government for this vacillation and hesitation. I do not complain of the changes they have made in the Bill. I hope they will make many more (laughter and hear, hear). I hope they may make so many and such great changes that we may be all once more re-united in the support of a measure —(cheers)—introduced by a Liberal Government. But it does not lie on these gentlemen, who have such an unsettled purpose, to fall foul of us because they think they discover here and there in the language we have used some inconsistency with regard to the alternative proposals which we have made (hear, hear).

THE UNIONISTS ARE CONSISTENT.

But, gentlemen, I go on to say that I deny this charge of inconsistency. I do not believe it exists, whether as between different members of the dissentient Liberal party, or as between different utterances of individual members of that party. As regards the different members of the party, I think any one who has read the outspoken address of Lord Hartington (hear, hear), which appeared in the papers this morning, will see that, at all events as regards the principles on which he would deal with this great subject, there is very little difference between him and me (cheers). I do not know whether we should agree as to details; it has not been our business to

discuss the details of an alternative policy; but as regards the principles which should govern any attempt to solve this question, I confess I am quite unable to see any inconsistency (hear, hear).

The Main Lines of our Plan.

Now, let me repeat once more, what are the principles which we have endeavoured to impress upon the minds of our countrymen? In the first place, we believe that the unity of the three kingdoms—which has been declared by Mr. Gladstone himself to be a paramount object which every patriotic citizen ought to maintain—we believe that that unity can only be secured by the assured supremacy of the Imperial Parliament (hear, hear), which must be fully and continuously representative of all parts of the United Kingdom (cheers). We are not satisfied with a nominal supremacy; such as exists, for instance, in the case of the great self-governing colonies of Australia and Canada. We have the right, forsooth, to make laws for Australia and Canada. Everybody knows that, although this right exists as a very interesting constitutional thesis, we dare not and we cannot exercise it (hear, hear). Well, we say in the second place, that in order to maintain this supremacy of Parliament, it is necessary that any local authority to be hereafter created must be distinctly subordinate (hear, hear); and that the superior authority must retain a sufficient hold over the executive in order to secure the observance of the conditions which are laid down. We think, in the third place, that the powers which are to be conceded to these local authorities should be strictly defined and limited, and that some means of preventing any improper exercise by the new authority of the powers which are granted to it should be secured, less extreme, less violent, than the employment of an army, in order to reconquer a practically independent country; which seems to be a result which some of the members of the Government regard with a light heart as the ultimate consequence of the policy they are pursuing. It is only by such a limitation of power, it is only by such a maintenance of Imperial authority, that in our judgment there can be any adequate protection of minorities, any security for the just rights of property, or for

the liberty of conscience (hear, hear). Those things are not to be secured by paper guarantees or by curious devices for minority representation. They can only be secured by maintaining intact and supreme the authority of the Imperial Parliament over all parts of the United Kingdom (cheers). Well, then, in the last place, gentlemen, we think that in any rearrangement of our constitutional system we are bound to see that new provisions are so devised as to be applicable to Scotland, Wales, and other parts of the United Kingdom as well as to Ireland (hear, hear). We say with regard to Scotland and Wales that they are nationalities as distinct, perhaps more distinct than that of Ireland. They are more homogeneous in their conditions as regards race and religion, and they are not less entitled to our sympathy because they happen to be formed of loyal and law-abiding peoples (cheers). Those then are the main outlines of our plan. It would be absurd and impossible, it would be the height of presumption, to attempt to offer details of any scheme which has to be founded upon those principles. That can only be done by those who have access to official information and to official assistance. But I have ventured in previous speeches, and I venture again, to say that you may find an example, at all events, and an illustration of some such scheme as we are proposing in the constitution of our Canadian Dominion (hear, hear). I have never pretended that the internal constitution of Canada could be bodily transplanted and adopted in the United Kingdom. I think that in some respects it goes too far for us, and in other respects it does not go far enough; but, as I have said, it is an example of how the principles which I think to be essential can be maintained, how you can have the unity of Imperial dominion, and at the same time the greatest possible diversity of local administration. It shows you how you can have the absolute supremacy of a central and supreme legislative authority, and how that can be maintained concurrently with a practical autonomy on the part of local bodies. It shows how the full and continuous representation of all parts of a united kingdom can be satisfactorily maintained. It provides for the separate autonomy of provinces which differ as regards

the majority of their inhabitants in race and religion. Upper and Lower Canada, once united under the constitution of 1840, were again separated upon the failure of that constitution to provide harmony and peace,—were separated by the constitution of 1865,—and the case is singularly analogous to the case of Ulster and of the southern provinces of Ireland; and, finally, the constitution of Canada secures what we hold to be of the utmost importance in the case of Ireland, the absolute independence of the judicial bench (hear, hear), and the entire control by the central and Imperial authority of criminal legislation and criminal procedure (cheers).

Will the Policy be Accepted by Ireland?

Now I think I have some reason to believe that some such system as this, differing in detail, made applicable to the particular circumstances of the case, would be acceptable to Scotland and to Wales. But we are told that it would be useless to propose it, because it would be rejected by Ireland. Where is the proof of that? (hear, hear.) How do we know that Ireland would reject what has never been offered to her? I daresay it may be safely predicted that the eighty-five Irish representatives who—most of them, I believe—are paid out of the Parliamentary fund in Mr. Parnell's hands (hear, hear), and who, all of them, have signed a document which compels them to an almost slavish obedience to the dictates of the leaders of the Irish Nationalist party—I daresay we might predict of them that they would reject any scheme that was offered to them as long as Mr. Gladstone's alternative proposals are being dangled before their eyes. But I cannot forget that the leaders of this same party rejected in advance Mr. Gladstone's proposals a few months ago. They declared that they would not accept anything less than Grattan's Parliament; that they would never accept any Parliament that did not give them control of the excise and customs, and the right to protect their industries. Some of them went further, and said they would never stop until they had broken the last link which bound Ireland to England (cheers). But now we are told to look upon all these as hasty expressions—(laughter)—used in moments of irritation,

and not as the settled determination of the Irish people. I am not inclined to treat as any more settled the present determination —(applause)—of Irish representatives to reject a boon which has not yet, but which may in the future be proffered to them. The decision in this matter will not rest with them (hear, hear). There are forces—great forces—behind them, and we have to decide to which of these forces we shall appeal, and which of them we will accept as arbiter. There are, in the first place, the people of Ireland, who have, the whole of them, a direct interest in this matter; and there are, in the second place, the American-Irish, who have, no doubt, strong sentiments of patriotism leading them to take the greatest interest in the fate of the country which originally gave them birth, but who are animated, I fear, still more by sentiments of deliberate and unquenchable hostility to England (cheers).

Is the Chicago Convention to Dictate the Policy of Great Britain?

Now, if we are going to allow the Irish-Americans to be the ultimate court of appeal in this matter—(no)—we need not discuss the question any further. We need not discuss Mr. Gladstone's Bill; let us put it aside. It is useless as a settlement of the matter. Let us grant separation; for it is separation, and separation alone, that will meet the demands of these gentlemen in America, whom Mr. Parnell now finds it convenient to repudiate in the House of Commons, but whose money (laughter and prolonged cheering), as far as I am aware, he has never rejected (hear, hear). Gentlemen, you may yield—the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland may allow its policy to be dictated by this Irish-American party; but in that case make no mistake, it is not a concession to justice, it is an abject surrender to dynamite (loud cheers). If, on the contrary, we are going to have regard to the feelings of the people of Ireland, let us first find out what the real opinion of the people of Ireland is (hear, hear). I doubt very much whether, at the present moment, they even know properly what local government is (hear, hear), so unsatisfactory and so incomplete have hitherto been all provisions for that

purpose in Ireland. The loyal population of Ireland, which, after all, amounts to probably one-third, certainly to more than one-fourth of the population of the country, would accept some such proposals gladly; and as to the others—as to those who are still dissatisfied with English rule—although I am less certain of their opinion, yet I think this, at all events, is clear: that to them Home Rule and national independence, and a Dublin Parliament and repeal of the Union, have all been more or less abstractions hitherto, which have been recommended to them as the only means by which they could secure the possession of their land on fair terms, the revival of native industry, and other material advantages. I doubt very much whether they have ever considered the details of any plan or scheme. I am quite certain that the present scheme of the Government in its practical working would never be accepted by them as a final settlement (hear, hear). But if the opportunity were offered to them, if they were brought to see that the decisive opinion of the majority, the great majority of the people of Great Britain, was opposed to an independent Parliament in Dublin, and if, at the same time, the opportunity were offered to them of a fair field for local patriotism and local ambition, if they were given the management of their own domestic business under proper conditions, and if Irish opinions and sentiments had full play in legislation wherever they did not conflict with the reasonable rights of individuals and classes, nor with the interests of the Empire, I doubt very much whether they would allow their representatives to refuse the chance which was afforded to them (hear, hear). In any case, it appears to me that we ought to try this before we come to the last resort—to the dangerous extremity which is involved in such Bills as those which have been recently before the House of Commons. And it is because we believe that the Irish policy of the Government is dangerous, because we know that if it were adopted we could never retrace our steps, or repair the mischief that would have been done—it is for this reason we have come here to-night, to found an association whose object it is to create and maintain a body of opinion within the ranks of the Liberal party which, while favourable

to decentralization and local government, is nevertheless hostile to a policy which we firmly believe to be dangerous to the interests of the Empire, and which we are convinced, if persisted in, would provoke a reaction which would be absolutely fatal for a long time to all Liberal progress and reform (cheers). I move, gentlemen, "That it is desirable to establish an organization, to be called the National Radical Union, for the purpose of promoting a system of local government applicable to England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and under the supreme authority of one Parliament for the United Kingdom" (loud applause).

BIRMINGHAM, June 19th, 1886.

OPENING THE CAMPAIGN.

[Mr. Chamberlain having again placed himself at the service of the Electors of West Birmingham, he was invited by the Liberal Association to address a public meeting in the Town Hall. A resolution approving his candidature was carried almost unanimously. Mr. Chamberlain was returned unopposed.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, who was received with loud cheers, said: Mr. Chairman and electors of West Birmingham, I am very glad at last to have the opportunity of meeting my constituents once more face to face. During the last few months I have gone through a time of great trial and anxiety. I have had a great responsibility cast upon me, and I have incurred much odium and abuse in consequence of the course which I have thought it my duty to take. Well, gentlemen, in public life one gets accustomed to a good deal of strong language from one's political opponents. I remember a story of the great French statesman, M. Thiers, of whom one of his political adversaries said that he was the most profligate scoundrel and ruffian on the face of the globe. One of his rather fussy friends came to M. Thiers and called his attention to this language, and he asked him whether he was not going to take some notice of it. M. Thiers said, "No; why should I? That is the only way in which this gentleman expresses his difference of opinion" (laughter). Gentlemen, although one easily becomes case-hardened to the ordinary abuse of one's political opponents, I will confess to you that I have been pained and grieved by some of the language which has been used by those with whom for so many years I have been co-operating in public life (cheers). I have been wounded in the house of my friends, and my foes have been those of my own household; and sometimes I have asked myself whether this game is worth the candle, and

whether I was called upon to pursue to the end this bitter struggle, which is foreign to all the objects with which I entered public life (loud cheers)—objects which are now indefinitely postponed by this new controversy which has been sprung upon us, but which at one time I had hoped were almost within our grasp. Well, gentlemen, the answer to that question that I have asked myself—the answer must come from you. Your council has selected me as your candidate for the representation. I have accepted their invitation (cheers), and I will hold the fort against all comers (loud cheers), from whatever quarter or under whatever name they advance to the attack. But the issue is in your hands. If you will continue to me your confidence and support, upon which I have rested so often in past times of difficulty and of trial, then I will carry through my task to the end (cheers); and if you should think fit to dismiss me from your service, in that case, be sure of this, that I shall not murmur or complain: I shall only be grateful to you for all your past kindness; I shall only be regretful that the opportunity to make a full and adequate return has been denied to me. (A voice—"We shan't do it," and loud cheers.) But you will not reject me (prolonged cheering). Your friendly greeting has already cheered and encouraged me (cheers), and all our relations are not to be lightly broken. They are exceptional in their character. It was you who first introduced me to public life, who gave me the opportunity of taking part in that local government whose dignity and importance I have ever endeavoured to sustain (cheers). The other day, in the House of Commons, Mr. Sexton taunted me with having been Mayor of Birmingham, and he said that that position was exactly up to the level of my abilities. I was surprised that any Irishman who is seeking self-government for his own country should cast scorn and contempt upon the local work and the local patriotism which has done so much for England and for Scotland. But the taunts of Mr. Sexton passed me harmless by, for you know that I am as proud of having been Mayor of Birmingham, and of having in that position had some opportunity of helping those who are nearest and dearest to me—my own people in the town in which I live (cheers)—as I am of any position

that I have subsequently been called upon to fill, or which the future may have in store for me. We have worked together; we have fought in many fights, and we have won many victories (cheers). We know each other; and I am sure that whatever of misrepresentation and malignant slander there may be in some quarters, at all events you—my friends, and electors, and constituents—you will not doubt the honesty of my purpose—(loud cheers)—or the sincerity of my convictions (hear, hear).

ALWAYS A HOME RULER.

Well, gentlemen, I do not like to dwell very much upon personal matters; but here in my own family, I think I owe to you a fuller account of the transactions in which I have been engaged than I would condescend to give to any of those who dare to doubt my honour or my consistency (cheers). At the last General Election you know that the very idea of Home Rule was scouted by the vast majority of the Liberal party (cheers); not by me, because I have always been a Home Ruler. But the vast majority of the Liberal candidates who presented themselves to the constituencies throughout the country would not even hear of the idea. I have said what was the general policy of the Liberal candidates. But in September, 1885, Mr. Parnell made a speech in Dublin, in which he demanded an independent Parliament for Ireland, and he said that he was quite convinced that one or other of the political parties in England would grant him what he asked for. Well, I had to speak a few days afterwards at Warrington, and on that occasion I referred to Mr. Parnell's speech, and this is what I said. I said, "If these, and these alone, are the terms on which Mr. Parnell's support is to be obtained, I for one will not enter into the competition for it" (hear, hear). If this claim were conceded we might as well for ever abandon all hope of maintaining the United Kingdom. We should establish within thirty miles of our shores a new foreign country (hear, hear), animated from the outset with unfriendly intentions towards us. A policy like that I firmly believe would be disastrous and ruinous to Ireland herself. It would be dangerous to the security of this country, and under these cir-

cumstances I hold that we are bound to take every step in our power to avert so great a calamity (cheers). Well, during the election in Birmingham I do not remember that I had any occasion whatever to allude to the Irish question. I believe that every one of our candidates declared himself unable to accept the Irish demands. ("Let's have the proof.") Every one of our candidates declared himself unable to accept the Irish demands (cheers). If he did not do so, how was it that the Irish vote was given against us? (loud cheers.) But after the election was over I spoke again in this hall, and on the 17th December I said as follows: "It is right, it is due, to the Irish people to say that all sections of the Liberal party, Radicals as much as Whigs, are determined that the integrity of the Empire shall be a reality, and not an empty phrase (hear, hear). To preserve the Union the Northern States of America poured out their blood and their treasure like water, and fought and won the greatest contest of our time; and if Englishmen still possess the courage and stubborn determination which were the ancient characteristics of the race, and which were so conspicuous in the great American contest, we shall allow no temptation and no threat to check our resolution to maintain unimpaired the effective union of the three kingdoms that owe allegiance to the British Crown" (cheers).

Acceptance of Office.

You will remember the circumstances under which the present Government was formed. The Prime Minister did me the honour to invite me to take a place in that Government, and he offered me in the first instance the great position of First Lord of the Admiralty, a position with a large salary and with an official residence, which are supposed together to be worth something like £5,000 a year. Is it not rather a curious thing that I, who am supposed to be animated by the paltriest and basest motives,—that I refused this great position—chiefly because I thought that it was hardly congenial or consistent with a Radical's position that he should occupy the headship of one of the great spending and fighting offices of the State (applause). And I preferred to accept the lowest office in the Cabinet

(cheers), an office lower even than that which I had filled before at the Board of Trade; and I accepted it because I thought that as President of the Local Government Board I might be able to do something to carry out the policy which you and I had so earnestly supported before the General Election (renewed cheers). But I told Mr. Gladstone, at the time I took office, exactly what my opinions were upon this Irish question. I told him that I did not believe that it would be possible to establish a Parliament in Dublin and at the same time to maintain the conditions which Mr. Gladstone himself had laid down as necessary and essential. Mr. Gladstone was good enough, in spite of this frank and full expression of my opinion, to invite me to join him in an inquiry into the subject, and I readily accepted his offer. I have doubted since whether I was right in so doing; and I will tell you that if I had known what was to be the nature of the inquiry, and how limited it would be, I doubt if I should have thought it my duty to join the Government (hear, hear). Well, on February the 4th, having accepted office, I issued my address to you. This is the last quotation with which I will trouble you; but I am bound to call your attention to the words I used, in order to show you what were then my opinions. I said: "I am ready to give an unprejudiced consideration to the claims and wishes of the majority of the Irish people as formulated by its elected representatives. I am prepared to support any just and reasonable proposal for a final settlement in accordance with the special necessities of the land and education questions. In connection with these subjects I am convinced that it will be necessary to concede to the Irish people a much more extended control of their own domestic business. But I appeal to my recent speeches, both before and after the election, as evidence of my firm intention to consent to no plan which will not sufficiently guarantee the continued supremacy of the Crown in that country—(cheers)—and the integrity of the Empire" (loud cheers).

How the Split Occurred.

Gentlemen, I have troubled you with all this ancient history in order to show you what were the opinions that I professed

when I last sought your votes and your suffrages. I stand on the same platform now (cheers). I have not in any degree changed, and it is for you to say whether I have forfeited your confidence by remaining faithful to the principles I professed when I received your support. I am not going to trouble you with any lengthened observations on the circumstances under which the Bills of the Government were introduced. I do not know who was consulted in the preparation of those Bills. I do not know who joined in the inquiry to which I was invited. I only know that the Cabinet had no opportunity of considering the question until the 13th of March, when the outlines of the Land Purchase Bill and of the Home Rule Bill were explained to them, and again on the 27th of March, when they were further expounded. I shall ask you to consider with me the main provisions of those Bills a little later, but in the meantime I only say that they appeared to me at first sight to be more objectionable than even I had supposed to be possible. I objected chiefly and firstly to the Land Purchase Bill—(cheers),—which would impose, as I thought, an unnecessary, an enormous, and an unjust liability on the working classes of England and Scotland for an object which I disapproved. I objected, also, to the Home Rule Bill, because I thought that the conditions which Mr. Gladstone himself had affixed to any measure of the kind were not fulfilled in the provisions of that measure (hear, hear). Accordingly, I resigned my seat in the Government and resumed an independent position (hear, hear). Do you think if I had consulted my personal ambition that I should have done that? (no.) Why, every inducement, political and private, would have led me to the other side. I was warned and threatened with the loss of everything that a politician holds dear—the possibility of the leadership, the support of the party, the applause of the multitude, nothing was wanting save two things: I should have lost, and deservedly, the respect of every honest man—(cheers)—and the approval of my own conscience (loud cheers).

What is the Government Policy?

I have said enough of the personal aspect of this question,

Now, let us turn to the main issue before us. If the Government policy is right, and just, and expedient, it does not much matter who was consulted in it—it is of no consequence as to how little or how great has been the consistency of its principal supporters. The first question is, is the policy right? (reiterated shouts of "Yes" and "No.") Gentlemen, I think you are answering the question before you know exactly what it is (hear, hear, and laughter). What is this policy of the Government which we are asked to condemn or to approve? I saw that the Prime Minister, when he started on Thursday on his triumphal progress (cheers), struck the keynote of the campaign on which he was entering by saying that the question was whether the Irish people should or should not manage their own affairs (cries of "Yes," and a voice—"They cannot," and laughter). Don't be in such a hurry (renewed laughter). Now, it would seem, I think, to all of us at first sight that that was a very simple and a reasonable proposition. We all want to manage our own affairs (hear, hear), and I don't suppose there are many of us who desire to interfere more than is absolutely necessary in the affairs of other people (hear, hear). But there are two points which I want to put before you for your serious consideration. Now let us argue this question together. The first point I have to put before you is this: If the issue is really as simple as it appears on this statement of it—as self-evident—how does it happen that the Prime Minister has never proposed it before? (hear, hear.) The Prime Minister has been dealing with Irish affairs during a great part of his life. He disestablished the Irish Church (cheers), he has proposed, too, and carried two great Land Bills (cheers), each of them in turn declared to be a final settlement of the question. He has endeavoured to deal with the University question; he has himself proposed and carried measures for the preservation of peace and order in Ireland, and even for the repression of political agitation—measures which can properly be described as coercive measures. He has had this question before him during the whole of this time, and he has never before proposed this settlement which appears to be so simple and self-evident. I am only stating facts. I

will tell you what conclusion I draw from them in a few minutes. I am not going to refer to the speeches of the Prime Minister delivered many years ago. If I had time I should like to quote to you speeches, delivered in 1871, in which the principle of Home Rule was controverted by Mr. Gladstone in language much more able, much more conclusive, than anything I could employ, and I will even say, going further in the principles it laid down, than anything I have ever said. But do not misunderstand me. I am not referring to this matter in order to convict Mr. Gladstone of inconsistency (hear, hear). That would be a very poor business (hear, hear). I do not think that a great statesman is bound never to change his opinions (cheers). I will tell you frankly that I think there is often much more virtue in an honest conversion than in a blind adherence to opinions which have been proved to be erroneous (renewed cheers). No, I have a totally different object. I am only referring to these in order to impress upon you the difficulty and the complexity of the subject. It is not a simple question. If it had been, Mr. Gladstone would have reached the solution long, long ago (hear, hear). If he has only reached it now—if indeed he has reached it—it is because it is much more difficult than it appears to be at first sight. I have said that I will not refer to what Mr. Gladstone said a long while ago; but, as you know, I was his colleague from 1880 to 1885, and I can say this, that during the whole of that time I had no intimation, I had not the slightest conception, that Mr. Gladstone had it in his mind at any time to propose the creation of an independent Parliament in Ireland. I will come even later than that. You remember that in the winter of 1885 there were rumours about his intention in the matter—there were reports and statements made by his son, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, and at last there appeared in the *Standard* newspaper a distinct statement that Mr. Gladstone intended to propose a Parliament for Ireland. What did he do? He contradicted the statement. He caused a communication to be sent to the papers to say that the statement was not an accurate representation of his views, but that he supposed it was a speculation upon them. And the *Daily News*, the Liberal organ,

took advantage of this contradiction to write that Mr. Gladstone had disposed for ever of the sinister design which was imputed to him by his Tory opponents (cheers). Now then, these are statements of fact; and what follows from them? That it is perfectly evident that this idea of a separate Parliament has only entered into Mr. Gladstone's mind within the last few months; and I will undertake to say that until it entered into his mind it had not suggested itself to the mind of one in a thousand of ordinary Liberals (cheers). Then I say, if that is the case, it is impossible that the solution of the Irish question can be the simple matter which you might suppose it to be on reading Mr. Gladstone's speech—impossible that it can be a mere question of allowing a people to manage their own affairs. Surely that is an idea which would have entered into the mind of a great statesman very much earlier in his career, and it would not have been only after fifty-four years of public service, and at the close of a long life; it would not have been only then that this simple and self-evident solution would have presented itself to the mind of one whom I without hesitation describe as the greatest statesman of our time (cheers).

Do the Government Accept their own Principle?

Now I want to put a second point to you. You observe my first point has been that if it was the simple question of the Irish people managing their own affairs we should have heard of it a long while ago, and from Mr. Gladstone himself. But now my second point is this: do the Government accept their own principle? Are they going to allow the Irish people to manage their own affairs? Let us see; let us examine the question without heat, without passion, quietly. Are they going to allow the Irish people to manage their own affairs? And I find this at the outset—that they are going to give to the Irish people a brand new constitution which they have prepared, and not the Irish (laughter and cheers). If the Irish people have a right to manage their own affairs, what is the meaning of this Bill, which bristles with precautions and safeguards, which teems with conditions and limitations? Surely the proper course would have been to say to the Irish

people, "We will withdraw all British authority and control as soon as you have elected a convention, and have settled a constitution for yourselves." Well then, again, why, if the Irish people are entitled to manage their own affairs, have we attempted to settle the land question for them (hear, hear), and to settle it very much against the opinion of themselves and their leaders? (hear, hear.) Why do we refuse to them in this Bill the right to establish their religion, if they think fit to do so? (hear, hear.) Why do we withdraw from them the control of trade and of navigation? (hear, hear.) Why do we restrict their powers of taxation, and prevent them from levying customs and excise? (hear, hear.) And why do we limit their authority in matters of education? (hear, hear.) Is that allowing the Irish people to manage their own affairs? (No, and cheers.) Ah! you begin to see now—(laughter and renewed cheers)—that the statement of the Prime Minister is incomplete, and therefore misleading! No one proposes, not Mr. Gladstone nor any one else proposes, to give to the Irish people the unrestricted right to manage their own affairs. But let us look at it sensibly. Does this right exist? And let us try it by a private illustration. We say that an Englishman's house is his castle. Yes, that is quite true; but no man is allowed to govern his own household so as to be a nuisance to his neighbours (cheers); and the right of any community to manage its own affairs must be connected with conditions, and in the present case those conditions must prevent any detriment to the larger kingdom, of which Ireland is only a portion. Now, gentlemen, if you have followed the argument which I have endeavoured to place before you, you will see that the issue before us is a complicated issue. It is not an abstract question, whether we are prepared to give to the Irish people the right to manage their own affairs. We are prepared to do that as far as it is safe (hear, hear, and applause), but the question is, what are the conditions which are to be attached to this concession? Now let us consider. I imagine that we should all be agreed as to the principle which Mr. Gladstone has laid down. I do not think there would be much difference of opinion as to the conditions which he has attached to that

principle. Where we differ is this :. that some of us think that none of the conditions which he has named have been fulfilled in the proposals which he has put before the House of Commons, and it is on that ground, and on that ground only, that we challenge the opinion of the country.

What are we Fighting About?

What are the conditions which Mr. Gladstone has himself affixed to the concession of local government in Ireland? I will only deal with the three most important of them. They are: first, the unity of the three kingdoms; secondly, the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament (hear, hear); and thirdly, the protection of minorities (hear, hear). Are these three conditions secured by the Bills which were before the House of Commons the other day, but which we are now told are dead? (hear, hear.) Mr. Gladstone at Edinburgh last night made a most important—I will say a most extraordinary—statement. He said that these two Bills were dead. But if so, where is the issue? What are we fighting about? (cheers.) Mr. Gladstone's plans no longer hold the field (laughter), and why are we to be punished for having defeated Bills which the author himself abandons and declares to be dead? (cheers.) But, gentlemen, if these Bills are dead (a voice—"Never")—— Oh, there is a gentleman there who knows more than Mr. Gladstone himself (loud laughter). Mr. Gladstone declares that the Bills are dead, but my friend in the corner is convinced that they are still alive (laughter). I suppose that he has got in his pocket a receipt to resuscitate the apparently drowned (roars of laughter). Well, but, gentlemen, if these Bills are dead, what is coming in their place? (hear, hear.) What is to be substituted for them? Where is the new plan of the Government? Why do not we hear what it is, so that we can pronounce a judgment upon it? And if the Government have got a new plan, how is it that they taunt us unfortunate critics —(laughter)—with variations and inconsistencies in the alternative proposals that we have made, when it appears that they have no Bill before the country, but only a blank page, upon which an alternative plan will some time or other be written?

We cannot argue upon a blank page (hear, hear). I cannot criticise a Bill which has no clauses, no preamble, no schedule (laughter). I can only criticise the proposals which have actually been before us. Perhaps my friend in the corner is right (laughter). Perhaps the Bills are not dead; they may be revived in October (hear, hear). At all events, until the Government produces a new plan, and gives us definitely in detail something that we can deal with, something that we can discuss before the country, we have only before us plans that we have defeated, and upon those we must argue as though they were a final expression of the opinion of the Government (hear, hear). Now take the conditions which Mr. Gladstone himself laid down last year. Are they fulfilled in the Bills which we have had before us? Take the question of the protection of minorities. How was that provided for? There was one minority which was very well provided for by the Land Bill (laughter). There were 10,000 individuals in Ireland—they were cared for (hear, hear), they have no cause to complain of the proposals which have been made for their benefit. So far as they are concerned, the protection, I admit, is complete (renewed laughter). But ten thousand landlords in Ireland were to be protected at the cost and at the risk of the British taxpayer (cheers). Yes, and you were to take a risk which at the beginning was to be fifty millions, but which very soon indeed would have mounted to 150 or even 200 millions (cheers), and you were to take that upon the security on which I will venture to say no private individual and no financial company would have lent a single farthing (cheers). And this bargain, which was to be made in your name, was voluntary on the part of the landlords (laughter), but it was compulsory on the part of the tenants (hear, hear). Is that allowing the Irish people to manage their own affairs? (no, and cheers.) Any landlord in Ireland was at liberty to accept or to reject this offer, but if he accepted it all his tenants were compelled to become proprietors of their land on terms which were settled for them by an alien and foreign authority. Yes, that was taking a tremendous responsibility on the shoulders of the British Parliament, and a tremendous risk and obligation.

The Irish leaders repudiate the terms which have been proposed. They say—I know not whether rightly or wrongly, but they say—that the Irish tenants cannot pay and will not pay these rents. But, gentlemen, when the Irish landlords are all cleared out, when they have gone to London or to Paris with English gold in their pockets, and when you are landlords in their place (laughter), how are you going to collect the rents? (laughter and cheers.) They will have to be collected under the authority of an Irish Parliament, which will consist of the men who have declared them to be exorbitant, and which will be elected by the men who have refused to pay them (loud cheers). Do you think there is much chance for the new landlords under those circumstances? (cheers.) How long will an arrangement of this kind last, and are you ready to pay the piper when it breaks down? (cries of "No.") But if the Irish tenants refuse to pay these rents, I ask you again, how are you going to collect them? (hear, hear.) The judges of the land will be under the control of the new authority. The police will also be under its control. You will have no judges on whom you can depend to enforce the law; you will have no police to serve your writs. You cannot have an army to collect your rents (hear, hear), and you will have to meet the deficiency, and to bear the burden of increased taxation in order to meet the loss which will be occasioned (cheers).

The Land Purchase Bill.

Well, one word more about this Land Purchase Bill. I observe that the Ministerialist candidates are very chary of referring to the Land Purchase Bill, yet I think it has been declared again and again to be an inseparable part of the Government policy; and I say that every man who voted for the Home Rule Bill practically voted for the Land Purchase Bill. If it be treachery, and desertion, and disloyalty to vote against half of Mr. Gladstone's proposals, surely it is just as much so to vote against the other half. I tell you that the people of England—this is the plain English of it—are being bamboozled about this Land Bill (loud and continued cheering), which is kept in the background because it is not con

venient to produce it. But if the Home Rule Bill passes, the Land Bill will pass as sure as I am standing on this platform (no). Some one says no. What does he know about the conditions of the Parliamentary conflict? If the Home Rule Bill passes, every Tory, every Whig, ay, and the House of Lords to a man, will vote for this Land Purchase Bill, and it will be carried by an enormous majority; and it will be perfectly futile for Radicals to make a feeble protest by walking into the lobby in a small minority when they know that there is an enormous majority against them. And in that case I warn you—mark my words—you, and your children, and your children's children, and the industries of the country, and the national resources will be loaded to all time with the intolerable burden of an enormous addition to the National Debt (loud cheers).

ULSTER AND THE PROTESTANTS.

'But, while there has been very liberal provision—much too liberal a provision—for a small minority in Ireland, what provision has there been for the greater, the larger, the more important minority of those who are likely to be injured by this legislation? (hear, hear.) There are in Ireland, out of five millions of people, a million and a half chiefly Protestants (cries of "No," "Yes"). It is silly to contradict facts (cheers). There are, I say, one and a half million who are chiefly Protestants, but who include in their number many of the most intelligent and the most liberal of the Catholics of the country, who regard this Bill with dread and abhorrence (hear, hear). I have letters every day from Protestant workmen and from Catholics holding positions of considerable eminence throughout the country, telling me of the fear with which they regard the prospect of the future (hear, hear). And for these men there is nothing—nothing but paper guarantees, which you cannot enforce.

Now, let me say a word or two about the question of Ulster (cheers). I cannot understand the language of some Liberals and Nonconformists when this matter is mentioned. Why, they are apparently of opinion that it is bigotry and intolerance to respect the desire of the Protestants of Ulster to

maintain their allegiance to a Protestant Parliament, and not to transfer themselves to the dominion of a Catholic assembly. They seem to think that it is a mark of illiberality to demand that this great population, certainly not the least important factor in the prosperity of Ireland—that its views should be considered in the final settlement of the question. Who are these Ulstermen? They are our flesh and blood (cheers). They come of the old English and Scottish stock, and they have done more for the prosperity and welfare of Ireland than any other part of the population (renewed cheers). They have reared up great industries in which they have held their own against the competition of the world. They have created a vast foreign trade, and a prosperous shipping trade, and their only fault is, if fault it be in these days, that they are too demonstrative in their loyalty (cheers). They are too devoted to the religion they profess, they are too earnest in the maintenance of the Union under which they have lived and prospered; and it is these men that the Government Bill would hand over to a Parliament dominated by the organization of the National League. Do you think that is a prospect which they can possibly regard with satisfaction? ("No.") Birmingham men! put yourselves in their places. Birmingham is not more British, it is not more loyal, it is not more industrious than Belfast. How would you like, in the name of liberty, in pursuance of the grand idea that people ought to manage their own affairs, to be handed over root and branch, hand and foot, to the dominion of an organization controlled by men of whom Mr. Gladstone himself has said that rapine is their object and that crime has dogged their footsteps? (loud cheers.) The leaders of the Nationalist movement speak now with bated breath and silky accents in the House of Commons. Yes, but the foul machinery and organization of crime still remains in the land, and even the leaders are not able altogether to control the forces, the dread forces, they have called into being.

I do not know whether you have seen the account of an outrage which took place only recently, within a few weeks, in Ireland. It was in the county Kerry, and there was a poor man there, not a member of a great class, not even the de-

pendent of a class. He was an ordinary tenant farmer of Ireland. I do not know what offence he had committed against the secret tribunal which had condemned him. I believe it was that he had cut peat from the bog of a farmer who had been boycotted by the League. But however that may be, a band of men—("Villains")—disguised in masks appeared at night at his house, broke open the door, drove his weeping wife and daughter out of the room ("Shame" and groans), and without regard to their supplications they called the old man before them, himself an invalid, deliberately shot him in the leg—("Shame")—and left him to die in agony in half an hour afterwards (loud cries of "Shame;" and a voice—"They are a bad lot"). Yes, they are a bad lot (disorder). Who is there in Birmingham who sympathises with these villains? (loud cheers.) There was a great band of them; their proceedings must have been known to many, and yet down to this day no one has been arrested for the crime—for the murder—which these men, these dastards, committed ("Shame"). I can understand there may be some people here who would be very glad to leave men of this kind to manage their own affairs (laughter). But that is no justification whatever for handing over the civilized population of Belfast and of Ulster to the domination of an organization under whose shadow these deeds of infamy can be performed (cries of "Never," and cheers).

One Parliament must be Supreme.

I have left myself very little time to deal with the other two conditions which Mr. Gladstone laid down; but they may be well treated together. The union of the three kingdoms can only be maintained by the supremacy of one Parliament for the whole country, and that supremacy depends on the full and complete and continuous representation of every part of the country in that Parliament (hear, hear). I wonder whether you working-men taxpayers have ever thought what would be the practical result of the proposals of the Bill as it was presented to Parliament if we ever got into a foreign war (hear, hear). That war might arise from the act of the Irish Parliament, or from the act of individual Irishmen (hear, hear). However it arose, it

would have been our business to defend them, and to pay the bill. And if this offer had been made, as any such offer ought to be made, to Scotland and to Wales (hear, hear), and if it had been accepted by Wales and Scotland, then you would have had this pleasant result, that every foreign war, every colonial expedition—and Heaven knows we have enough of them—would have to be paid for entirely by the English taxpayer. I think it is perfectly futile to talk of the integrity of the Empire when there is only one part of the Empire which is expected to bear the whole expense and the whole obligation of it.

There is another point I have not noticed in reference to the supremacy of Parliament. We say that under these Bills it is a paper supremacy, and a paper union which is constituted; and I think that the term "paper unionist" would be much more applicable to those gentlemen who depend upon a charter for the observance of the union, and who have no force whatever in order to maintain it (cheers). But my point is this: that if you had a real supremacy of Parliament then you might dispense with all other provision for the protection of the minority—a minority which does not want protection in the Imperial Parliament, but only in a sectional Parliament, elected by a local majority; that then there would be no danger of oppression or persecution, and that if we maintain the real and effective supremacy of the Imperial Parliament we might do away with the two orders, and the veto, and the property qualification, and the life peers, and all the other ingenious devices, which are altogether obnoxious to every Liberal principle, and at the same time do not give confidence to any of the interests they are intended to protect (cheers). But we are told, gentlemen, that if the paper conditions of this treaty are broken we can always withdraw the concession we have made; we can take back the constitution we have given. That is an illusion and a deception. It would be no slight matter to reconquer Ireland after we had established an independent Parliament, and had given to it full authority over all the resources of the country. It would be a task which would involve such an outlay of blood and treasure that I do not believe there is any sensible man who would think of under-

taking it for the purpose of securing the observance of one clause or another in an Act of Parliament, by the main provisions of which there had already been surrendered everything of the slightest importance (cheers). And when Sir William Harcourt and Mr. John Morley talk in a cheerful strain about the possibility of employing the whole of the military forces of the Crown in order to enforce their paper charter, and at the same time urge us to surrender everything to the threat of outrage and assassination, I say they seem to me to expect of their successors a courage and a firmness of determination which they are very far from exhibiting themselves (cheers).

I think I have said enough to explain to you the main objections which I have taken to the policy of the Government. My objection to the Land Bill is absolute, and cannot be removed (cheers), my objection to the Home Rule Bill is more qualified (hear, hear). But I do not think I should be induced to vote for any other Home Rule Bill unless I were assured beforehand that the Land Bill would be dropped (hear, hear), because, as I have told you, I am absolutely certain that if the Home Rule Bill is passed the Land Bill cannot possibly be defeated. But if such an assurance be given, and if it be true that the Government are going to introduce a new plan, in the preparation of which they will consider the criticisms which have been made, then I hope it may still be possible to re-unite the Liberal party (loud cheers), and that we may all find ourselves in agreement in the autumn on some large measure of Home Rule and Local Government for Ireland (loud cheers) We are told that we have nothing to do at the present time with details; that we are only concerned with the principle of the Bill, which is dead (laughter), and that principle is described to us in vague language which all of us could accept, because it covers the most various and inconsistent propositions. But, gentlemen, I sincerely and respectfully urge upon Mr. Gladstone that this is not a fair way of putting the issue before the country; and if the issue is put in this form the decision of the constituencies will not be conclusive. Let me put it to you in the shape of an illustration. Suppose you were ill; suppose a man came to you and said, "Will you have some medicine?" and you said,

"What medicine?" and he replied, "Don't trouble yourself about details (laughter), the only question which you have to consider is, 'Will you or will you not take some medicine?" (renewed laughter.) Surely you will be justified in saying, "I will not take your prescription until I know what it is" (hear, hear, and cheers).

Well, gentlemen, my friends and present constituents, and I hope my future constituents, I ask you once more for your support (cheers, and "You will have it"). If you will accord it to me I pledge myself that I will bring an unprejudiced mind to the consideration of any proposals which may be made by the Government in October (cheers). I am not aware that I have ever been actuated by any personal feeling; but if I have—if such an idea has ever entered into my mind—I will studiously dismiss it, and I will have regard only to the interests of Ireland and to the interests of Great Britain (cheers). But I will not pledge myself blindly to accept and swallow whatever may be offered to me (cheers). "Measures, and not men"—that was once one of the great Liberal doctrines (hear, hear)—and I will not believe without your authority that it has yet lost its force and its sanction, or that you are prepared to substitute for it the new doctrine of political infallibility (hear, hear). If you return me to Parliament, I will serve you honestly in the future as I have endeavoured to serve you in the past (cheers). But in no case will I prove myself unworthy of your respect by surrendering the independence which you have hitherto been good enough to concede to me. (Loud and prolonged cheers, during which Mr. Chamberlain, who had spoken for an hour and twenty-five minutes, resumed his seat.)

BARROW, June 24th, 1886.

"IN THE THICK OF THE FRAY."

[Mr. W. S. Caine was first elected for Barrow-in-Furness in April, 1886. On the formation of the Unionist Liberal party in the House he acted as whip for the Radical Unionists. Two months later, at the General Election, he was opposed by a strong local candidate in the Gladstonian interest, and was assailed with the bitterest animosity by the Irish leaders. Mr. Chamberlain was invited to address a meeting in support of his candidature. Mr. Caine was ultimately returned by a largely increased majority.]

MR. CHAIRMAN and gentlemen, I am very glad to see before me so great a meeting of the electors of Barrow. It is a great task and a great exertion to make a speech to such a vast assembly, but if you will kindly be patient and silent I think I shall be able to make myself heard to the extreme corner of this large hall. I have come here to-night at the request of my friend Mr. Caine, and in the earnest hope that I may, in however humble a degree, promote his candidature for this borough. You have, perhaps, not known your present member very long, but I will undertake to say this, that the longer you know Mr. Caine the better you will like him personally (cheers). You may differ from him on some points of politics or other questions, but I am sure that you will recognise in him the true qualities of an Englishman—his honesty, his resolution, and his courage. They are the characteristics of the English race, and such as have carried us through so many difficulties and dangers (loud cheers). We want such men among us in times of national crisis. Mr. Caine has invented a name for them—he has called them the "Stalwarts" (hear, hear). We cannot spare the stalwarts at the present moment, when there are so many people walking about with no opinions to speak of (cheers and laughter), who change their principles as often as they

change their shirts (laughter and cheers); and of whom you may say, with the hero of the Biglow Papers,—

> "Well, supposing we had to gulp down our professions,
> We was ready to come out next morning with fresh uns.'
> Besides, if we did, 'twas our business alone;
> For cannot we do what we like with our own?"

(laughter.)

THE NEW GOSPEL.

Gentlemen, we are meeting here to-night to consider one of the gravest issues ever presented to the people (cheers). I hope that we are ready to consider it calmly, dispassionately, and with good temper. Mr. Caine and myself, and many others who have thought alike on this matter, have now to bear some hard language. Lately we have been called traitors by people who have not done as much for the cause as we have done,—by the minor lights of the Ministerial party,—and we have been called seceders even by the great leader of that party himself. But what shall we call our opponents? What shall we call those who for the moment are our opponents, although a few weeks or a few months ago they were our friends and allies? I remember that last autumn I was going about the country doing what I could to advance the Radical programme which you, the great majority of you at all events, still accept and support. I noticed everywhere I went advertisements of Conservative meetings, in which there was the most curious mixture of the business of politics and light refreshments (cheers). I remember one of these meetings particularly. It was attended by some of the most distinguished leaders of the Conservative party, who were to address the meeting in the intervals of other entertainments. But the great attraction was the indiarubber youth. It was said that the indiarubber youth could turn fifty somersaults in a minute, and at the end of that could turn himself inside out. Well, the proceedings of that personage are nothing to the gyrations and evolutions of many Liberal candidates, ay, and of many Liberal voters, during the past few months (hear, hear). Whatever we call ourselves or are called by our opponents, remember this, that we cannot escape the responsibility which is thrust upon all of us; and I say to you,

most of whom I have no doubt belong to the working classes, that it is upon you, as I hope to show before I sit down, that the heaviest burden will fall if any mistake is made. Now I do not doubt that the decision of the democracy will be a wise one when the question is fully presented to it (hear, hear). The difficulty—the only difficulty I foresee at the present moment—is that the issues are clouded and confused, and there is only a very short time to bring before you in all its details the consequences of the policy which has been so suddenly sprung upon you and upon us (hear, hear). What is that issue upon which you are called upon to vote? In the first place you have to decide between two persons—between Mr. Caine and Mr. Ainsworth. Mr. Caine you know; and this, at all events, you must say about him, he is now what he has been always; he professes the same opinions exactly; he has not varied one hair-breadth, one tittle, since he first obtained your suffrages. Mr. Ainsworth is a most respectable and honourable man; he is a good Liberal, and I believe he agrees on 99 points out of 100 with what Mr. Caine accepts, except, perhaps, that Mr. Caine goes a little farther than he does. He is a little more Radical than Mr. Ainsworth (no) upon 99 points out of 100 of the Radical creed (cheers). But upon the hundredth point, upon this very great question of policy, there is a difference. When Mr. Caine asked you to return him, he asked you to give him some kind of independence, some right to exercise his own judgment, upon the new proposals which might be brought before the House of Commons. Mr. Ainsworth comes before you pledged beforehand to put his vote at the service of the party whips (no). I ask you to read and read again a letter which has been written to Mr. Caine by my friend and colleague, John Bright (cheers).

Mr. Bright and the Government Bill.

Mr. Bright is also now described as a seceder—Mr. Bright, whose whole life has been spent in the service of the people, who has done more than any other man, not even excepting the Prime Minister himself, to advance the material interest, comfort, and welfare of the great mass of the population,

Mr. Bright, forsooth, is also a traitor and seceder. Well, I daresay he can bear these epithets. He has been called so before. He has been a seceder on more than one occasion—that is to say, he has ventured to differ with the majority of his party. On the occasion of the Crimean war (hear, hear), on the occasion of the Chinese war, he differed from the majority of the Liberal party, and very recently he left the Government because he could not agree with its Egyptian policy. Do you say he was wrong? (no.) No, he was right upon all these occasions, by that gift, that noble and bright instinct, which has preserved him from errors into which other politicians have fallen. I do not believe there is a public man now living, or who has lived, in this country who can point to so long a service with so little to look back upon with regret, with so few and such trifling errors to acknowledge (cheers). Well, once more John Bright differs with the majority of his party; and I venture to tell you that, as it has been before, so it will be again, and that, too, in a short time. Those who now condemn him will admit that now also he has been right (cheers). Mr. Bright has given his opinion that you should not turn your backs upon your present representative because he has shown an independence which is not too common in these days (hear, hear).

What are the Issues?

But behind the question of the candidates there is a greater question still. There is the greater question of the policy they represent. Let us consider this question also. What is the policy of the Government which we are asked to support? The answer to this question is very difficult, because there are no two members of the Government who say the same thing about it, and every member of the Government who has spoken has spoken in language so vague and so indefinite that it is capable of more than one interpretation (hear, hear). A week ago or a fortnight ago, if I had come down here to speak, I should have told you without hesitation that what you would have to do would be to express your approval or disapproval of the two Bills which were laid before Parliament the other day as the definite expression of the Government policy as regards Ireland.

One of those measures was the Irish Land Bill, which would have burdened England to an enormous extent in order to buy out the Irish landlords; and the other measure was that for setting up in Ireland a practically independent Government, and with the certainty that in a short time you would have had total separation between Ireland and Great Britain (cries of "Yes" and "No"). Is that the issue now? Is that the point now between us and our opponents, between Mr. Caine and Mr. Ainsworth? The Government have appealed to the country; they have brought about a dissolution at a time when it will cause the greatest inconvenience to trade and agriculture; and at least I say it is their duty to put a plain issue before the people,—something that there can be no mistake about,—that you may know upon what it is you are called upon to vote. We also appeal to the people, and we are also prepared to accept your verdict. If it is against us, we shall accept it as unconditionally as if it was in our favour. But we want to know that the verdict is plain, and definite, and conclusive. Is it so in the present case? (cries of "No" and "Yes.") Let me ask you to examine with me very carefully—because it is a most important question at the commencement of the General Election—let me ask you to examine carefully with me the utterances of the most prominent members of the Government. I will take first Mr. Gladstone himself. I do so because he is first in rank and first undoubtedly in ability (hear, hear), and because, also, this is his policy and his policy alone (cheers, and no, no). There is no other man in the Government, ay, or out of it, who would have dared to lay these proposals before the country, and very few would have dared to support them if they had not behind them the great personal influence of the Prime Minister (hear, hear). At the present moment the great proportion of the Liberals, a vast majority, have only, as it were, found salvation in the last few months (laughter), and they are engaged now in trying to discover answers to their own previous arguments. Now, what does Mr. Gladstone say? He says the two Bills are dead, and that the Government have now recovered perfect freedom to consult upon the best and safest means of obtaining that perfect security for the Imperial

unity and supremacy, which they agree with us in thinking to be essential conditions of any settlement (laughter). To whom do they owe that position, to whom do they owe their freedom? They owe it to us (cheers); they owe it to Mr. Caine and the independent Liberals who voted on the 7th of June that they have been relieved from an embarrassing position and have recovered their freedom to consider better and safer means for securing Imperial unity (cheers). They are not grateful to us (laughter). They admit that these Bills were imperfect, else why were they withdrawn. One of them, we are told, is dead, while the other is to be completely remodelled; and yet they are using every exertion and employing every device to oust from their seats those members of the Liberal party who brought about the result which they acknowledge to be so desirable. Mr. Gladstone says in another passage that every man prepared to give an effective control to Irishmen over their local affairs is a good Ministerialist candidate. He says that, and yet he and his supporters, both of high and of low degree, are moving heaven and earth to destroy the political life of every man who opposed his Bills, although many of us have always been ready to give to Irishmen the most extensive control of their local business consistent with the safety and integrity of the Empire.

An Advocate for Local Control.

If that is to be the platform of a Ministerialist candidate, I could stand upon it with a good conscience (cheers). I have advocated the control of Irish affairs by Irishmen ever since I entered into public life. Mr. Caine is now in the same position, and so are a great majority of those now described as seceders, and who are unable to accept the proposals in the Government Bill. I saw the other day at Edinburgh that the Prime Minister entered upon a curious calculation as to the composition of the majority which defeated his measure. He said that there were among the Liberals who voted against the Bill sixty-seven exactly who were unwilling under any circumstances to concede any kind of legislative body to Ireland (hear, hear), and then he said there were five gentlemen who

were personal adherents of Mr. Chamberlain. I really do not know from whom he got these figures. I suppose from the same source which misinformed him entirely as to the division. At all events, Mr. Caine could tell him that he is grossly mistaken. There were not five Liberals in the last House of Commons, but there were fifty, who, if they were not personal adherents of mine, were, at least, independent men, who would not bind their faith to the infallibility of any politician (cheers), but who were perfectly ready to accept the principles which Mr. Gladstone contended for, and who were perfectly ready to give to Irishmen full control of local affairs, but who, at the same time, utterly disapproved of the method, and plan, and the main outlines of the Bill which Mr. Gladstone had introduced (cheers). I may say more than that. If the sole object of the Government were to obtain a declaration in favour of this vague principle there was no need of putting the country to the trouble of a dissolution, there was no need to dissolve that Parliament from which we all expected so much, and which was ready and willing to proceed with the great work of domestic reform, for which, and for which alone, it had received the mandate of the constituencies (cheers). Mr. Gladstone was told if he would withdraw those Bills, the details of which we objected to, and if he would substitute for them a resolution affirming the principle, which he said was all that he wanted to affirm, that we would vote for it, and in that case it would have been carried by a sufficient majority. Then why did he not accept the offer?

AN OPPONENT OF THE METHOD.

I say it is because the Government wanted something more than the affirmation of a principle; they wanted to commit the House of Commons, as they now want to commit the country, to the details and methods which I believe a vast majority of the country entirely condemn (cheers). Now I will try and show that I am right by referring to the opinions of other members of the Government. I will take Lord Spencer, who has made many speeches, and who said at Chester the other day that there had been and could be no vacillation in the policy of the Government because that would be

dangerous to law and order in Ireland. He did not think there had been any vacillation and any change in the policy. What is the use then of telling us that these Bills are dead? We are not called upon to vote for a vague principle, which, as I have said, may cover all sorts of interpretations. If you give your vote at this election upon this assumption you will be grievously deceived, and you will find the proposals to which we have taken objection revived again in all their vigour in the autumn session. I will ask your attention to another quotation. The Chief Secretary for Ireland said at Leeds that these Bills were dead, but that they would revive; and he said that he would never be a party to leaving the Irishmen to deal without British aid with the question of Irish land, and he went on to defend the provisions of the Bill for buying out Irish landlords. Seriously, whatever your opinions may hitherto have been, I ask who is deceived? Is it Lord Spencer, Mr. Morley, or is it you and I? Are these Bills dead, or are they going to be revived? I will give you a test. If these Bills are dead, if the Land Bill, with all its consequences, is dead and is not going to be revived, then neither Lord Spencer nor Mr. Morley could stay in the Government without being the most dishonest and dishonoured of politicians (cheers). They are not that; they are true-Englishmen; they would never submit to such a situation, and therefore I beg you to watch their position carefully. If they resign their positions in the course of the next few hours, then you may believe if you like, and you will probably believe rightly, that the Land Bill is dead and that the Home Rule Bill will be remodelled. But if they do not resign, then be sure of this, that these Bills represent the settled policy of the Government, and if you give a majority to the Government, you will have them passed through the House of Commons (hear, hear). I daresay you have sometimes seen in your streets people who earn a precarious livelihood by shamming insensibility in order to excite compassion, and when they have received enough in the way of alms from passing people, then they revive again and walk off with recovered health and apparent strength. I want to know whether these Bills are shamming dead? (laughter and cheers.) Whether they are

dead only to catch votes, and when they have done that, whether you will have them upon you again with their pristine vigour, and force, and strength?

Mr. Gladstone on the Land Bill.

I hope you have read the letter which your member has written to Mr. Gladstone on the subject of the Land Bill. It is a most interesting correspondence; it throws a great light upon this subject. Mr. Caine concluded his letter with a plain and straightforward question. He said, "Is it your intention to abandon your proposal in the Land Purchase Bill?" I should have thought that it was almost impossible to answer that question except by a yes or a no. But Mr. Gladstone's letter occupies thirty lines of print, and it refers Mr. Caine to a speech which Mr. Gladstone was about to deliver in Edinburgh, and in that speech he referred his audience to another speech, which occupied thirty or forty pages of print, and to another letter addressed to another correspondent (great laughter). I have read both these letters, and I declare to you on my honour that I have not the slightest idea what Mr. Gladstone means to do with regard to the land question (hear, hear). Mr. Gladstone said that the proposals for land purchase were an inseparable part of his Irish policy, at the moment at which they were made, but he does not say whether they are inseparable now or whether they are to be separated. He says that Parliament is not bound, unless it likes, to join them together. Well, we know that Parliament can do what it likes; but what Mr. Caine and I feared, and what we all feared in this matter, was, that if we allowed the Home Rule Bill to pass, there was a probability that all the Radicals in the House of Commons put together would not be able to prevent the Land Bill being carried by a large majority. The Land Bill would have been supported by the Government, by the Tories, by the Parnellites, and by the weak Liberals; and what would have been the use of a few miserable Radicals walking into the lobby with their tails between their legs in order to make an empty protest against a Bill which they detested? We were, therefore, driven to take the only method

in our power by voting against the second reading of the Bill which was tied up with it.

The Issue Concealed from the People.

I should like to know very much what is the present position of this Land Purchase Bill. I say I cannot find any indications in any of the speeches or in any of those two letters of the definite intentions of the Government. Is it fair to their opponents? (no, and yes.) Is it fair to you—to the constituencies—is it fair that you should be asked to go into this election and know nothing as to whether or not by your vote you are burdening yourselves by an addition to the National Debt of £150,000,000 or £200,000,000 of money? At all events it should be made clear, and you ought not to give your vote to any Ministerialist candidate until the head of the Government, the one man whose word is conclusive on a matter of this kind, has announced his decision. Here is a dilemma. Is the Bill dead and defunct? Shall we never hear of it again? Has it gone to a bourn never to return, and where it will never be lamented? In that case we will look forward to the action of Lord Spencer and Mr. Morley, and see how they regard the way in which this matter has been disposed of. Either that is to be the case, or else this Bill lives. This Bill will be revived, brought in again, if the Government obtains a majority. In that case you will have contributed by your vote to its passing, and imposed on yourselves a risk and a burden which have never fallen on any country before, except when it has been defeated in some tremendous war (cheers).

The Home Rule Bill.

While it is difficult to discover the intentions of the Government with regard to the Land Purchase Bill, its intentions are still more mysterious with regard to the Bill for the Better Government of Ireland. I have already referred to the statement of Mr. Morley on this subject. He has told us the principles of the Bill, the main principles and main method of application, and the main consequences of these principles, will survive. On reviewing the question, it is clear to me that

any one who votes at this election for Government candidates is committed to the Government plan. It is true that we are told that the Government are ready to consider any better plan which may be proposed to them. This would be very fair and very satisfactory if it were not that all the time Mr. Gladstone persists in condemning and ridiculing any alternative plan proposed. He is doing his utmost at the present time to get his old colleagues and supporters turned out of Parliament wherever any of them have ventured on any independent criticism of the plan which he himself has proposed. I cannot doubt, then, on a review of the whole circumstances of the case, that if the majority of the Parnellites and the Ministerialist candidates returned are sufficient to form a majority of the House of Commons, you must make up your mind that you will have to pass their two Bills as they were presented to us in the Parliament now closing, with such amendments as Mr. Parnell himself may think fit to ask from Her Majesty's Government.

A Gigantic Bribe.

I want to ask you, in the first place, do you desire this? Are you ready to be a party to this gigantic bribe of £150,000,000 or £200,000,000? (loud cries of "No.") One hundred and fifty or two hundred millions of your money to be given to Irish landlords—the class which Mr. Gladstone himself has pointed to as being the principal cause of your Irish difficulties? (no.) I ask you, do you want this great transaction to be accomplished at your expense (no, no), at a time when all trade is depressed, when we cannot get from Parliament or from the Government even the smallest measure in order to promote the advantage of the agricultural labourers of England and of Wales, or in order to secure the material interests of the crofters of Scotland? I say if you are not satisfied that your money should be used at this time in such a way and for such a purpose, if you are not willing to run this great risk, I advise you, by all means, that so far as Barrow is concerned, your vote should be given without hesitation for the man who has declared his absolute dissent from those proposals, and whom you can trust to give an inde-

pendent vote in the future, as he has done in the past (loud cheers).

A Rival Parliament.

Well, then, the second question I want to ask you is this. Do you want to have a rival Parliament in Dublin—(loud cries of "No, no")—one filled, mind you, with the men who in past times have done their utmost to promote disaffection and agitation in Ireland, filled with the men who have declared, solemnly declared, their intention not to rest until they have broken the last link that binds Ireland to Great Britain? You know that these proposals are recommended as a final settlement of the difficulty. But believe me that they would only be one step to a greater difficulty than ever, a step towards even greater agitation and irritation than we have seen even in times past. What hope do you think that there would be for the objects we have kept in view; for promoting all those items of the Radical programme which I helped to develop during the autumn—for free education, for a reform of the land laws, for local government throughout the three kingdoms, for the revision of taxation—what chance do you think there would be for these things so long as Ireland is discontented, and represented in an independent Parliament, whose policy, and interests, and inclinations would be to raise fresh questions between this country and theirs? (cheers.)

The Irish Tribute.

Now let us look at this a little closer for a moment. Ireland would have to pay a tribute of four and a half millions as their part of the taxation, and something like five millions in lieu of rents. Well, suppose they refuse to pay (laughter, and "Not unlikely"). Remember that all these sums have been fixed in opposition to the opinions of the Irish leaders. They objected to the proposed distribution of the burden between the two countries, and they objected to the terms for buying out the Irish landlords. Suppose the Irish Parliament, expressing these views, refuses to pay her tribute of nine and a half millions? (hear, hear.) How are you going to collect it? (cheers, and a voice: "The army and the police.") There is

a gentleman who knows (laughter). He says by the army and the police. The police you have given up, and the police will belong to the Irish Parliament. There is your first means of recovery gone (loud laughter). But are you going to collect it by the army? Whoever heard of an army collecting rents? (laughter.) Are you going to employ the army to carry out evictions? If the Irish people refuse to pay these sums, are you going to send your army to reconquer the country? Do you know what that means? I dare venture to say that 100,000 men would not be sufficient for such a purpose, and I should like to know how the Continent of Europe or the people of America would look upon such an attempt. If the conditions are broken, it is not you that will have the power to impose them (hear, hear). If you have not power to enforce the conditions, and if they are broken, I will tell you what you will have to do. It may be humiliating, but I cannot help it; it will be your own fault. You will have to yield every demand the Irish Parliament may make, and wipe off the debt, and you will have to find—and it will serve you right—you will have to find out of your own pockets the additional taxes in order to enable you to fill up the deficiency (cheers).

If Ulster Refuses.

Suppose that the people of Ulster will not submit to this new Parliament in Dublin, what will you do then? I saw the other day a deputation of working men from Belfast (hear, hear). They were like you: they came from the loom and the forge. They seemed to me to be plain, steady, sensible, and sober-minded men. But there was a ring in their voices and a determination when they said they would never agree to give up their allegiance to the British Parliament, under which they had hitherto lived, and submit to what they believed would be the tyranny of a Parnellite Parliament in Dublin. There was, I say, a ring in their voices which boded very ill for the new authority. Suppose this feeling—it may be right, it may be wrong, that is not my point, it exists—suppose this feeling finds expression, what are you going to do? Will you coerce them? Will you send British soldiers to shoot them down because

they are loyal? (no.) Will you destroy these men because they tell you that they prefer the self-government which they enjoy in common with the rest of Her Majesty's subjects to the tyranny which has already been established over a great part of Ireland by the National League? (cheers.) The Government are very tender, very tender, indeed, towards the men who a short time ago Mr. Gladstone described as marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire. But they are very determined and very vigorous indeed when they come to deal with these men of Ulster, your own flesh and blood, of Scottish and English stock, planted there by the action of the English Parliament, whose only fault is that they will not transfer their allegiance to a new authority which they distrust (loud cheers).

An Alternative.

Well, I say these are questions—serious questions—which we have to answer before we can settle this apparently simple matter. But then you are told that you must take the policy of the Government because there is no alternative. I have shown you there is no policy, but I deny that there is no alternative; and if these Bills are dead, I say it is our plan that holds the field. Our plan is a very simple one. We will give to Ireland the amplest possible extension of local government which we will give to Scotland, Wales, or to England, or which would be accepted by them. We will maintain the supreme authority of the one Imperial Parliament (cheers), as the only guarantee for the property and the lives of all the subjects of the Crown. I said to you when I began my speech, that the issue presented to you is the gravest that was ever presented to the people. I implore you to consider it with the great attention which it deserves. Put aside all personal feeling and all partial affection. Remember that you are trustees of a great inheritance. To you, the new democracy, has been entrusted the destinies of this great country. Is there any one here, any Englishman, any Scotchman, or any loyal Irishman, who is not proud of these two isles which form the United Kingdom? See to it that in your hands their glory suffers not, that there

is no diminution of the lustre which shines upon your British annals. It was my good fortune to have the personal acquaintance of the greatest popular leader that France has ever known—I mean the late M. Gambetta. I remember a speech of M. Gambetta's, in which he spoke of the duties and responsibilities of the democracy, and he wound it up by saying that the democracy—he alluded, of course, to the democracy of France—has yet to show that, at the cost of whatever sacrifice of personal or party ambition, it is able and willing to govern a great Empire. I do not doubt the English democracy will be equal to its task. We have before us the example of the United States of America. They have shown us how it is possible to obtain a unity of Empire with a diversity of local administration. They have fought the greatest contest that the world has ever known. They triumphantly vindicated the principle which we seek to establish (cheers). It may well be that out of this painful controversy which now divides us permanent good will come if we show to the world our determination—the determination of the whole British people—to maintain the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (Loud cheers, during which Mr. Chamberlain resumed his seat).

UNIONISTS IN BIRMINGHAM.

July 2nd, 1886.

[On the night before the election for the Bordesley Division, the Town Hall of Birmingham was the scene of a great demonstration in favour of the Radical Unionist candidate. Mr. Chamberlain was the principal speaker, and his confidence in the sound judgment of the electors was fully justified by the result of the poll, Mr. Collings being returned by a majority of 3,435 over his Gladstonian opponent.]

MR. CHAIRMAN and electors of the Bordesley Division, I have accepted, with great pleasure, the invitation which has been given to me, and I am here to-night to support the resolution which has just been moved, and to give whatever assistance I can to the candidature of my old friend, Mr. Jesse Collings (cheers). I am only sorry that there should have been found any Liberal in Birmingham to oppose him (hear, hear), for there is no man who has higher claims to the recognition of the Liberal party than Mr. Collings has at the present time. I have nothing to say against his opponent, Mr. Tait (hisses and cheers). I have always thought him to be a clever man, although somewhat eccentric (laughter). I remember a short time ago he wrote a letter to *The Times*, in which he said that he had been kicking his heels for two hours in the lobby of the House of Commons (laughter), and that he had sent in his name to some twenty members who were his intimate personal friends, and that none of them had come out to relieve him from his awkward situation (laughter). And he went on to say that he was convinced that it would be easier for him to gain a seat in the House of Commons than to obtain one in the Strangers' Gallery (laughter). That is an experiment which

he is prepared to try—(renewed laughter)—at the expense of the Bordesley Division (loud laughter). Gentleman, I can only hope that you will send him back to his work a sadder and a wiser man (laughter and cheers). But, gentlemen, I suppose that my friend Mr. Tait would himself be the first to admit that, if this Irish question were out of the way, his claims could not compare for a moment with those of his opponent (hear, hear). Mr. Collings has lived amongst us for more than twenty years; his public life is known to all of you; and during the whole of that time he has been one of the most strenuous, most self-sacrificing advocates of the popular cause (cheers). He has been a member of the Town Council, he has been your Mayor, he has been a member of the School Board, he has been a member of the Grammar School Committee—and in all those positions he has done his utmost to promote the interest of the great majority of the people. To him, in large measure, we owe those splendid free libraries and the art galleries, which are the pride and the honour of the town (hear, hear, and cheers). He has done more, perhaps, than any one else to popularise the cause of free education; he has inaugurated the popular concerts (cheers), which have given so much pleasure to so many of the working classes (cheers). But he is not merely a local politician; although to have been a local politician, and to have secured the confidence of his fellow-citizens, is no mean honour for the greatest of men. But Mr. Collings has made himself in a special sense the spokesman of the agricultural labourers, of that great class in our population the most numerous and the least fortunate, with whom he has always expressed and felt the deepest sympathy, the more profound because he can claim to have descended from one of themselves (cheers). I have heard with regret that the friends of Mr. Tait have placarded the division with some expressions—hasty and ill-considered expressions I hope they were (hear, hear)—which fell from Mr. Gladstone when he was speaking at Liverpool the other day—(shame)—with respect to your candidate (shame). They do no honour to Mr. Gladstone (cheers), and I hope the time will come when he will think him his enemy who ventures to recall them (hear, hear).

"A CERTAIN MR. JESSE COLLINGS."

What is it that Mr. Gladstone has said of Mr. Collings? He said, "There was a certain Mr. Jesse Collings (shame), who had connected himself with a policy of three acres and a cow (laughter)—a policy which he (Mr. Gladstone) did not share, and who was now engaged in the endeavour to obstruct beneficent legislation" (shame). Ay, gentlemen, these are words which show how it is possible for a great leader, whom we have respected, whom we have almost worshipped, in a moment of temporary irritation, under the pressure of a great political controversy, to forget what is due from a leader to his followers (loud cheering), forget the generosity and the gratitude that we expect even from the most eminent of men. Mr. Gladstone forgot that a few weeks ago this "certain Mr. Jesse Collings" was his colleague in the Government (hear, hear), invited by himself to take part in the administration of the country (hear, hear). Mr. Gladstone forgot that to Mr. Jesse Collings, more than any other living man, was due that victory in the counties for the Liberal cause—(loud cheers)—which retrieved the disasters in the boroughs (loud cheers). Mr. Gladstone forgot that it was Mr. Jesse Collings who moved and carried the resolution which turned the Tories out of office, and which placed himself in power (cheers); and Mr. Gladstone forgot that on that occasion he knew perfectly well who Mr. Jesse Collings was (cheers). He supported his resolution; he approved of the policy which he now repudiates, and he went into the lobby to vote for the motion which demanded urgency in the interest of the agricultural labourers, although since he has done nothing to give effect to it. I do not care to dwell upon this. I hope it may be forgotten when the smoke of the battle clears away (hear, hear); and I turn with greater pleasure to the main issue which has brought us together.

THE MAIN ISSUE.

What is the issue which separates Mr. Collings from his opponent? What is the issue which you have to decide by your votes to-morrow? Have you read the addresses of the candidates? Then, I will say to you that the address of Mr.

Collings is, at all events, clear—is distinct—is decisive. He tells you why he disapproves of the policy of Mr. Gladstone, and he tells you what policy he would substitute for it. But the address of Mr. Lawson Tait is vague, is inconclusive, and is illusory. Mr. Lawson Tait takes refuge in vague and specious phrases. He covers himself behind high sounding words, and he is afraid to discuss the barrenness of his programme (cheers). He appeals to the great principles of freedom and justice, as though he, and he alone, had a monopoly of them. Ay, but he does not tell you what chance there would be of freedom or justice for the people of Ireland if that unfortunate country were handed over to the tyranny of the National League (cheers). And then he says that we are called upon to decide whether we will give to Ireland the self-government—(applause)—which England and Scotland have enjoyed for generations (hear, hear). Ah, you cheer that too. Then I hope (addressing an individual in the side gallery) you will join Mr. Tait in his retirement (cheers), and that you will study English history; for I tell you, you have great need of it (loud cheers). Mr. Tait is rather hazy about his historical allusions. If he has the opportunity to look to the history of the past fifty years, he will find that it is only within the last half-century, it is only since the year 1836, that England and Scotland have had the right to govern themselves, even in their own municipal boroughs. And now, at this moment, England and Scotland are absolutely without anything in the nature of effective local self-government in the counties. It was only twelve months ago that the extension of the franchise took place, and that two millions of capable citizens were for the first time permitted to give effect to their opinion as to the way, and the method, and the details of the government under which they live. But, after all, where Mr. Tait evades the real issue is in supposing, or in allowing you to suppose, that there is any self-government which has been granted to England, to Scotland, or to Wales—or which by any possibility can be conceded to or accepted by them—which we would not at the same moment, with a free and equal hand, grant to our fellow-subjects in Ireland (cheers).

An Evasion.

No, gentlemen, that is not the question; it is a deliberate evasion of it. In Mr. Tait's address you will find nothing whatever as to the proposals of the Government, as to this rival Parliament which it is proposed to set up in Dublin, consisting of the enemies of this country (cheers). I will not say consisting of the enemies of this country, but I will say, elected under a system which has been subsidised by those who are hostile to the best interests of the United Kingdom. And in Mr. Tait's address you will find not a word—ah! mark this significant omission—not a word about the Land Bill, about the proposals to burden you with this enormous addition to your National Debt. Why are these things omitted? Mr. Tait says nothing about them; but we do not need that he should speak in order to know what his intentions are. He is going to accept—to open his mouth, and to shut his eyes, and to take whatever Mr. Gladstone will send to him (laughter and cheers). And if he were returned to-morrow—you will pardon so absurd a supposition (laughter)—and if the Government were to have a majority, then, in that case, you may take it for granted that the Land Bill and the Home Rule Bill will once more be introduced into Parliament, and that Mr. Tait will support them (cheers). I have complained that Mr. Lawson Tait is a little obscure in his address. That is not his fault. That is the fault of the chief he has elected to follow (hear, hear). Mr. Lawson Tait is going to follow his leader (hear, hear). But he cannot tell you where he is going (loud cheers), because, if his leader knows, he has kept it a profound secret in his own breast. What is the policy of the Government? Is it not an extraordinary and absolutely exceptional thing that here, in the very midst of the election, we should be asking this question, and we can find no man to give us an answer? (hear, hear.) The policy of the Government—it is like that Yorkshire horse of whom it was said that it had only two defects—one was that it could not be caught, and the other was that when it was caught it was worth nothing (laughter and cheers). The policy of the Government is hard to find, and if you found it I will undertake to say that it would not commend itself to your approval

(hear, hear). I see the Ministerialist candidates talking at their meetings of the necessity of trusting the people. Yes, "trust the people"—that is a phrase which we also have used, and which we have meant when we used it. But what I complain of is that the people are not being trusted—they are being tricked (loud cheers). I complain that the great leader of the Liberal party has not, in this supreme moment of the destinies of the Empire,—he has not taken the people of the country, the party which he leads, he has not even taken his own colleagues into his confidence, and they differ among themselves as to his meaning and intention. I say that is not fair to the people (cheers). It is not fair to the constituencies, who are asked now to pronounce a decision. We are invited to take part in the most momentous election which has ever been held since the Reform Bill of 1832. The existence of this great Empire, with all its complicated interests, with its hundreds of millions of dependent souls, its very existence may be at stake, and I defy you, I defy the warmest adherents of the Government policy, to say definitely and distinctly what it is.

There are Two Voices in the Government.

Now let us look at this matter a little more closely. Let us look in the first instance at this Land Bill (hear, hear), about which Mr. Lawson Tait is so discreetly silent (laughter). Is the Bill dead? (cries of "Yes," "No.") There is difference of opinion here, and I do not complain of it, for there is difference of opinion everywhere (cheers). Now, remember, all this uncertainty might have been dispelled by a sinple word from the Prime Minister (hear, hear). He was challenged—I challenged him myself (loud cheers)—in the House of Commons on the debate on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill—I challenged him to say whether he abandoned the policy of the Land Bill, or whether he maintained it (a voice—"What did he tell you?" Laughter). Well, if it were any lesser man I should say that he evaded the question (laughter). But he has spoken since then in different parts of the country. He has spoken, to use his own expression, by the hour and by the yard (laughter), he has filled scores of columns of closely printed matter in the

press of the kingdom, and even now his own adherents—the members of his own Cabinet—do not know what he means, what his intention is, for they give to it a different interpretation (hear, hear). I observe that in Edinburgh two important members of the Government, members of the Cabinet, have been speaking on this subject. They are the Secretary of State for War and the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and they have declared that the Land Bill is dead, and will not be revived. Mr. Childers has said that for his part he will never support any proposal to contribute a large amount of British capital for the general purchase of the interests of Irish landlords. That is no doubt very satisfactory as far as it goes. It does great credit to the Scottish constituents who have heckled Mr. Childers. They have a great estimation for the Prime Minister, but they are sensible and shrewd men, and they will not sacrifice their interests or their judgment to any man, however eminent and illustrious he may be. I should attach, however, more importance to Mr. Childers's statement if he had told us how it was that he had remained in the Government when they proposed a Bill which he now says he will never support. He has been converted; he has found salvation. I congratulate him on his newly acquired freedom, and I suppose the result will be that at the first meeting of the Cabinet Mr. Campbell-Bannerman and Mr. Childers will tender their resignation. But, in the meantime, I find that there are other members of the Cabinet not less important, and, in regard to this question, still more influential. There are Lord Spencer and Mr. Morley, and they do not tell you that the Bills are dead. They tell you that they are sleeping, but that they will wake again. They tell you that for their part they will not be a party to any settlement of the Irish question which does not involve a preliminary dealing with the land question. They insist upon this as a cardinal and essential part of the Government policy. There are two voices in the Government. Which is the true one? Why are the people mocked? Why does not the head of the Government decide between these conflicting voices? Why does he not tell you, as he can do by a plain yes or no, whether he stands by the policy of the Land Bill, or

whether he admits his mistake and has utterly abandoned it? I can only read one lesson from these proceedings—I can only draw one conclusion. The Bills are dead for the election—(cheers)—but they are alive in the mind and the intention of the Prime Minister, and they will revive again if you give him a majority (hear, hear).

The Land Bill—an Imprudent Speculation.

Now let us look at the Bills. Let us see what they are. That is the policy on which you are voting—that is the policy which Mr. Tait will support; that is the policy which Mr. Collings will oppose (cheers). Let us see to which side you ought to give your support. Let us look at this Land Bill. Mr. Gladstone told us at Liverpool that it was an investment (laughter). Well, as a rule, I think those are the wisest people who make their investments for themselves (laughter). But Mr. Gladstone wants to have your commission to invest 150 or 200 millions on your behalf. Let us see whether you ought to give him *carte blanche* in this matter. What is the investment you are asked to make? I have said that it is 150 or 200 millions. I make another complaint against the Government. I say that they have not dealt openly with the people in reference to the amount which will be required in order to give effect to their policy. You will remember that in the first instance it was estimated by Mr. Gladstone himself that 113 millions of consols would be required to purchase the properties which he anticipated would be offered for sale. But in the debate on the Home Rule Bill Mr. Gladstone said that he was very glad to admit that the arguments of Mr. Trevelyan and of myself had had their weight with him, and that now he was glad to say that only fifty millions would be proposed as the issue of consols. I did not quite understand his statement at the time. I understand it now (laughter). What has he altered? He has not altered the scheme of his Bill—the plan of his Bill he has not altered, or any one of the incidents of his Bill; he has taken a pen, and he has altered his estimate (hear, hear). He is going to make provision only for fifty millions. If 150 or 200 millions are required, his successors will have an obligation of honour—

(hear, hear)—which they cannot refuse—(cheers)—to fulfil (hear, hear). Gentlemen, I call this juggling with figures (cheers). Mr. Gladstone's scheme involved an offer to every landlord in Ireland to sell his estate on the basis of twenty years' purchase of the judicial rents. Well, considering that there are many landlords who cannot get a farthing rent, I thought that that was an offer which the majority would be very likely to accept (laughter). But whether they accept it voluntarily or not, Mr. Bright showed in his speech last night—(cheers)—that the circumstances will be too strong for them; that they will have to accept it whether they like it or not (hear, hear). If one estate is purchased, it will be absolutely impossible for the owners of the estates in the neighbourhood to continue to exercise authority over unwilling tenants, from whom they will never obtain one farthing of income. Therefore you may take it for granted that if this policy goes forward it will be accepted—it must be accepted—by every landland in Ireland. And in that case the amount will be not fifty millions, but much more—near 200 millions. How much is that? Well, speaking roughly, it is £5 a head for every man, woman, and child in the three kingdoms (shame). Speaking roughly, it is an investment of £25 for every family in the three kingdoms which the heads of those families are invited to make in Irish land (cheers). I wish you joy, gentlemen (laughter and cheers),—I wish you joy of the speculation upon which you are willing to enter (not yet). But I would remind you that prudent people, when they are asked to make an investment, are accustomed to inquire what will be the profit—(laughter)—and what will be the security. In this case, of profit there is none (laughter). It is not even offered to you. The utmost you are to expect is that you may in fifty or sixty years, if you are still alive, recover your money, and that in the meantime you will have the lowest interest at which money can be raised with the aid of the security of the British Empire. No. Profit there is none.

A Bribe to Landlords.

But the inducement which is held out to you is, that by this vast transaction you may bribe the Irish landlords to with-

draw their objection to a scheme which would establish a separate Parliament in the United Kingdom, and which, perhaps, would carve out a separate country from the Empire to which we all belong (cheers). But, gentlemen, what is the security—what is the security for this heavy speculation? It is to be found in Irish rents, collected from tenants who have declared that they are unable to pay them, and collected by an Irish Parliament, whose members have declared that they are unwilling to enforce them (hear, hear). That does not look very promising for your investment. The Irish Parliament will be elected—the new Irish Parliament—under the influence of the National League. The National League is the successor of the Land League, and the Land League is the organization which, according to Mr. Gladstone himself, preached the gospel of public plunder—taught the tenants of Ireland that it was immoral to pay rents, told them that they ought not, that they must not, that they should not, pay one single fraction of their obligations. What chance do you think there will be for the English creditor—for you and for your children—when these men so taught owe you 150 millions, and when your only chance of getting the money is through the agency of those who have given them this instruction? How are you to secure it? I tell you you will have to whistle for your property (loud and prolonged cheering). How are you going to collect your Irish rents? (laughter.) You will have handed over to the Irish Parliament all the machinery and the organization of law and justice. You will have nothing in your hands but the army. Are Her Majesty's forces to collect rents in Ireland? (no.) Do you expect that the English regiments will take upon themselves the duty of process-servers, or that they will occupy Irish tenements as bailiffs? (no.) No, you can have no hope of any such result; and I am quite convinced that if you yield to the persuasion which is put upon you, if you accept this legislation, —above all, if you accept this Land Bill,—that the time will come when not Mr. Gladstone—he will have retired—but when his successors will have to wipe off this vast sum as a bad debt, and will have to lay upon your shoulders new taxes and new burdens, in order to pay the interest of the loans which will

have been raised (cheers). I am told that the masses are in favour of this policy. I do not believe it (cheers). I do not believe that the democracy has gone mad (renewed cheering). I do not think that the people of England, in pure gaiety of heart, are going to run this vast risk—are going to pledge their future, and that of their children, in these times, when the horizon is dark, when thousands and tens of thousands of men are clamouring for employment and cannot find it, when we want all our resources for ourselves—(cheers)—I do not believe that you are going to strip yourselves in order to purchase the unmaking of England, and the separation of the three kingdoms (cheers).

THE UNMAKING OF ENGLAND.

For, gentlemen, believe me, that is what you are asked to purchase at this great price. You are asked to pay 150 millions to set up a rival Parliament in Dublin—ay, a rival and a competitor to the great Parliament at Westminster, the mother of Parliaments, the type and the model of free institutions throughout the globe, and the one only security and guarantee for the rights, and the liberties, and the property of all Her Majesty's subjects. Now, there is one other point that I want to impress upon you. At whose request, and for whose benefit, are you called upon to make this sacrifice? (cries of "Parnell" and "The Fenians.") Not for the benefit of England, or Scotland, or Wales. England, and Scotland, and Wales would repudiate with scorn and contempt any proposal to break up our ancient constitution, and to give to them in place of it a mongrel scheme of self-government—(cheers)—which would shut them out from the privileges and from the obligations of the Empire. But if they would not accept it, it does not follow that they would not be injured by its concession to Ireland. Even the most ardent supporters of the Government proposal—Mr. John Morley, for instance, who has been in this matter strenuous and consistent, and to whom, therefore, I pay all honour—even Mr. John Morley admits that it is a tremendous risk; but he asks you to try the experiment. He, for his part—he has no faith in the courage and the endurance of the British nation. He does not believe that you can continue that work of government which

your ancestors have so magnificently performed. He thinks that England is played out, and therefore asks you to wash your hands of this Irish difficulty and this Irish business, and to concede to Irish demands all that has been asked for (never). But he tells you there is a great risk. Yes, there is a great risk. You are asked to stake upon the hazard of a die the authority and the influence, perhaps even the existence, of the Empire (never). All I can say is that, for my part, I will never be a party—(loud cheers)—to such a dangerous and ruinous speculation.

Is it for the Interest of Ireland?

But is it for the interest of Ireland? (a voice—"Yes," and loud cries of "No.") I am prepared to admit that the interests and the wishes of Ireland ought to have great weight in the settlement of this controversy; and I will even say that the demands of Ireland should in every case be conceded where they are not inconsistent with the interests of the greater Empire of which Ireland is only a fraction (applause). But are you sure—you who say yes so hastily—are you sure—what reason have you to know—that the desire of Ireland is for the passing of these Bills, or that such legislation would be for the true interests of the Irish people? ("By her representatives.") Yes; we'll come to that in time; let us take everything in its turn (cheers). I am going to examine the question, and I say that in the first place you have the undoubted fact, the undeniable evidence, that one-third of the population of Ireland —one and a half million—are entirely hostile to these proposals—(no, and cheers)—and remember that in that one and a half million are contained all that is most industrious, all that is most intelligent, all that is most loyal, in Ireland (cheers). Well, I say that if these men stood alone, they think, rightly or wrongly, that their liberties, even their lives, would be in danger (no). They think so; you do not, but you are not living in Ireland. They think that their lives and their liberties would be endangered, and they implore you not to desert them ("We never will"). If they stood alone, you could not, without eternal shame and humiliation, hand them

[redacted] the tender mercies of their opponents. You could not [redacted] he interests of those men, who trust to you, whose [redacted] their loyalty (cheers), whose only crime is [redacted] in being still members of the United Kingdom [redacted] the blessings of that free government in which t[redacted] in being called upon to share the obligations of the Empire at the same time that they enjoy its privileges. But they do not stand alone. Besides that, there are many in Ireland whose voices are not heard at the present moment, but who, if they dared to speak, would tell you that they distrust and fear the legislation which Mr. Gladstone has proposed (hear, hear). I receive many letters from Ireland, and it is a curious, it is a painful, characteristic of them, that in every case the writers implore me not to disclose their names, because, they say, their lives would be in danger—("shame")—if it were known that they wrote to me. I received yesterday a letter—I only quote it because it is the type of many others—from a Roman Catholic, a small tenant farmer in the south of Ireland. He said: "Although I dare not say openly what I write to you, I wish to tell you that I myself, who am a Roman Catholic, and many of my fellow-farmers around me, to whom I have spoken, thank you and agree with you in the course which you have taken (cheers). We look forward with dread to the establishment of a Parliament in Dublin, which would rest upon the tyranny of the National League" ("Quite right"). You may say, why did not these gentlemen make their opinions known at the last election (hear, hear). Well, gentlemen, even under the ballot it is not very pleasant to have to vote one way and to say that you have voted another. It is difficult, even in England, for an honourable man to act a lie (cheers). It is still more difficult under present conditions in Ireland. I do not know whether you have noticed, as I have noticed, a significant fact at the last election. There were an extraordinary and unexampled number of illiterate voters (cheers). I do not believe that the Irish people are more ignorant than the people of England or of Wales ("They never were"). There is some gentleman there who appears to know, and who agrees with me. Then how comes it that the proportion of illiterate voters,

which in England and Wales was almost infinitesimal, was in many elections in Ireland a large proportion of the voters? It was [illegible] in order to evade the secrecy of the ballot, the [illegible] But I [illegible] you [illegible]red, under pressure from the National League [illegible] priests (no, and cheers), to declare themselves illit[illegible]so that their votes might be known, so that their t[illegible]ght know that they had voted as they had been or[illegible]to vote (cheers). But I will make an admission. I will say that even after making allowance for this great minority of one and a half million of people who openly avow their opposition to those Bills, and after making allowance for the large minority that are forced by the terrorism to which they are subjected to vote against their will, that there would still remain a great proportion—it may be a majority—of the people of Ireland who would, if they had the opportunity, voluntarily of their own free will vote for Home Rule and for the establishment of a separate Parliament. That I admit. But I ask you to go behind the vote, and I ask you to consider why it is that Home Rule, which in times past under O'Connell, when the grievances of Ireland were (cheers)——Ah! you cheer him now, but I doubt very much whether he would have sympathised with any such policy as that which we have seen before us; but I say you have to consider why it is that Home Rule was weak under O'Connell—under the great O'Connell—at a time when Irish grievances were much more serious than they are now; why it was weak under Mr. Butt before the last Irish Land Act—before other reforms which have done much to meet the desires and wants of the Irish people; why it is so strong now? It is because Mr. Parnell has been able to connect it in the minds of many of the tenants of Ireland with the agrarian question, with the land question, which is their chief interest. They have been taught that through the agitation for Home Rule they have already received great benefits in the shape of a reduction of rent, and that through Home Rule they may receive in the future still further reductions, or get their farms for nothing. They have been told that through Home Rule they may obtain protection for Irish industries and the exclusion of British manufactures. Well,

gentlemen, you know that these statements are deceptive and illusory; you know that the Bill, as far as its provisions can be enforced, would make it impossible for any Irish Parliament either to deal with the land question—it is to be dealt with in the first instance by the British Parliament—or to [redacted] with any matter connected with trade and navigation. P[redacted]n if that be so, the Irishmen who voted for Home Rule a[redacted]- ting what they want, what they have asked for, what t[redacted]e expected, and when they get it there will be only disappointment, there will be further irritation and agitation, and instead of settling finally this Irish question you will only have laid the foundation for greater difficulties and for more serious dangers (cheers).

A Surrender to Conspiracy.

Let us look this question in the face. In 1881—that was only five years ago—Mr. Gladstone, speaking at Leeds, said, "Our opponents are not the people of Ireland. We are seeking to relieve the people of Ireland from a tyrannical yoke." Nothing has altered since then (hear, hear). There has been no change in the methods of the agitation, or in the men who conduct it; and yet now Mr. Gladstone has abandoned his contention. He apparently has come to the conclusion that the resources of civilization are at length exhausted. He is prepared to capitulate, he is prepared to hand over Ireland to this tyrannical yoke, from which he intended five years ago to deliver her (shame). These Bills are not a concession to justice, they are not a concession to the intelligent demands of the Irish people. All the intelligence of Ireland is opposed to them (no, yes). They are a surrender to Mr. Parnell—(loud cheers)—and to the forces behind him (renewed cheers). Mr. Parnell—(groans)—is going about the country; he is amusing—I will not say that he is befooling—vast audiences of English Liberals. He has repudiated almost every word that he has uttered during the last few years (a voice—"So have you"). That is an interruption—(laughter)—of which you are quite as well able to judge as I (loud and prolonged cheers). Mr. Parnell, I say, is repudiating now every important utterance which he has made during the last few years. He tells the people of England

that he accepts on behalf of the Irish people, and as a final settlement, these Bills of Mr. Gladstone. I do not doubt his sincerity, but I say that he has no mandate, no authority to make that settlement (cheers). Some time ago he said himself that there was no man who could set bounds to the march of a nation—there was no man who could say, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." He is not the man to do it now. He is but the creature of the agitation over which he has appeared to preside, he is but the puppet of forces greater than himself (cheers). His springs are moved by the dynamite conspirators of America and by the National League; and if he accepts these proposals as final, he will be pushed aside; he will have served his purpose, and his place will be taken by men more extreme and more violent than he is (hear, hear). You know whence this movement has derived all its vitality and all its force. It is one of the most remarkable things that the subscriptions which have maintained this agitation have come almost entirely from a foreign country, hardly at all from Ireland. The Irish tenants have benefited by millions a year by this agitation, and yet their contributions can be counted by tens and by hundreds of pounds; but the money has come from the American-Irish enemies of this country, who have found it in order to stab England by their means (applause). The larger proportion of the sums which Mr. Parnell has received, and which he has used in order to conduct the Irish elections, and in order to maintain in Parliament the Irish representatives, have been contributed through the columns of the *Irish World*, an American newspaper, which has been the organ of the dynamite party; and the *Irish World*, in the last few weeks, has had an article in which they have pointed out the absurdity and the insufficiency of these Bills, and has declared that although it may be wise to accept them as an instalment, they can never be accepted as a final satisfaction of the demand of the Irish people; that they were only a fulcrum for further agitation.

A Momentous Decision.

Gentlemen, now you see the issue, now you know the question which you have to decide. It is one thing to grant the

wishes and to meet the requirements of the Irish people; it is another thing to drop upon your knees to the conspirators in America (hear, hear). You have a momentous decision to take. This is an unexampled crisis in our national history, it is an unparalleled chapter in our annals. You have a Prime Minister in the very height of his popularity, turning round upon himself, upon all that he has said, upon all that he has been understood to say—(laughter)—for I know not how many years, and making an abject surrender to the vile conspiracy which has endeavoured, I fear not altogether without success, to shake the constancy of English statesmen by threats of outrage and assassination (loud cheers). Gentlemen, will you share in this humiliation? (no.) Will you be a party to this surrender? (no, never.) The British democracy is upon its trial (hear, hear). On your shoulders have descended all the traditions of the past. To you is entrusted the defence of your country. Your action is being watched with the keenest interest by every dependency in every quarter of the vast dominion that your ancestors have established. In all our colonies—above all in India, where hundreds of millions of men acknowledge the sway of England, not merely for the display of force which we are able to make, but because they believe us to be brave, and bold, and enduring (cheers)—in every country over which the rule of the Queen extends, these proposals have excited an alarm amongst the friends, and a sinister interest amongst the foes, of England (loud cheers). These two islands have always played a great part in the history of the world (cheers). Again and again, outnumbered, overmatched, confronted with difficulties and dangers, they have held their own against a world in arms ("And they will again," and loud cheering), they have stubbornly and proudly resisted all their enemies, and have scattered them like chaff before the wind (loud cheers). And if in the future, if now you are going to yield to the threat of obstruction and agitation (never), if you tremble at the thought of responsibility, if you shrink from the duty which is cast upon you, if you are willing to wash your hands of your obligations, if you will desert those who trust to your loyalty and honour, if British courage and pluck are dead within your

hearts, if you are going to quail before the dagger of the assassin and the threats—(never, and protracted cheering, the audience rising in a body)—and the threats of conspirators and rebels, then I say indeed the sceptre of dominion will have passed from our grasp, and this great Empire will perish with the loss of the qualities which have hitherto sustained it. (Loud cheers, during which the right hon. gentleman resumed his seat.)

CARDIFF, July 6th, 1886.

NO SURRENDER.

[Mr. Chamberlain addressed a large audience in the Drill Hall, Cardiff, in support of the candidature of the Hon. H. R. Brand, who as a Unionist candidate opposed Sir Edward Reed.]

He said—I have come here to-night to lend whatever small aid I may to the candidature of my friend Mr. Brand (cheers). He is a Liberal, a man of consistency and straightforwardness (renewed cheers). Those are qualities which we shall prize the more, because they have been rather rare of late among Liberal statesmen (laughter and cheers). I want to put before you in the first place two facts which I think afford a welcome omen of success in to-morrow's contest (hear, hear). You will remember Mr. Brand was one of the tellers in that memorable division on the 7th of June which sealed the fate of the Disruption Bill (cheers). His comrade on that occasion was my friend Mr. Caine (cheers). Mr. Caine sat and sits for a great northern constituency which has some features in common with your own. It is a working-class constituency. It is not only Liberal—it is even Radical—and the Radical and working-class constituency has honoured Mr. Caine by returning him again to the House of Commons by a larger majority that he had before (cheers). His majority includes by far the largest proportion of the Liberal party (cheers). The second fact is that I come to you from Birmingham—that is, of all others, the town in which aggressive Radicalism has its centre. Birmingham has been distinguished by its popular sympathies; it is entirely a working-class constituency, and has given a solid vote for the Union between Great Britain and Ireland (cheers). Not Birmingham alone, but all the constituencies of which Birmingham is the centre, within I know not how many

miles, have up to this time, without exception, sent representatives pledged to oppose the fatal policy of the Government. Mr. Gladstone has appealed to the masses; the masses have considered his Bill, judged it, and rejected it (cheers). They have refused to capitulate to the vile conspiracy to which so many statesmen have bowed (cheers). I ask you to confirm that verdict to-morrow, to swell the voice of those great popular constituencies that have refused to have any part in this humiliating surrender.

The Greatest Controversy in our History.

Even at the risk of tediousness I must ask you to let me recapitulate some of the circumstances under which this great issue, the greatest controversy of our time, the greatest controversy almost in the history of the country, has been thrust upon us (hear, hear). Six months ago we were also in the throes of a General Election. We were discussing registration, local government, procedure, and the land laws. We were discussing, some of us, three acres and a cow (laughter and cheers). "Then there was a certain Mr. Jesse Collings," of whom the Prime Minister has almost forgotten the name (laughter), but who has done yeoman's service for the Liberal party in I know not how many constituencies. But at that time I venture to say there was not a man in this hall, hardly a man in the country, who had any conception that almost the first question we should be called upon to deal with in Parliament was this tremendous change in the constitution of the United Kingdom (cheers). Mr. Gladstone has written, I think, to my friend Mr. Bright, that for the last fifteen years he has said nothing against the principle of Home Rule, and he leaves it to be inferred that he was all the time in favour of it. Gentlemen, he kept his secret well (laughter and cheers). I ask you, Liberals especially, whether it is quite fair to a great party that its leader should hold views of this kind upon the most important question that can possibly be raised, and not to give the slightest indication of them for fifteen years, even to his nearest friends and supporters. During the whole of that time his followers and his colleagues in the Cabinet had been going up and down the

country denouncing Home Rule and repudiating any concession to the demands of the extreme Irish section, and Mr. Gladstone never told them they were treading on dangerous ground, never suggested to them that the time was coming when he himself would enrol himself as one of Mr. Parnell's followers (cheers). I am not inveighing against the policy, which I will discuss later, but I am protesting, as I think I have a right to do, against methods by which it has been brought to the front. I say that these methods are contrary to the best traditions of English statesmanship and contrary to the genius of the people. What has been the result? Have the interests of Ireland been advanced? No, I believe they have been thrown back, perhaps for a considerable time (hear, hear).

The Liberal Party Shattered.

In the meanwhile the Liberal party has been shattered by its leaders. It has been rent from top to bottom; there is a fissure in it which will take a long time to close up (hear, hear). Mr. Gladstone is trying now by countless means to drive from the Liberal party and from political life every man who has shown the slightest independence of judgment (cheers), every man who has repudiated this policy so suddenly sprung upon us; and then he calls us, forsooth, seceders and deserters. But, gentlemen, when a captain in the navy complains that none of his officers will serve a second voyage with him, when he says that his crew take every opportunity to desert at every port, I think the Admiralty will be inclined to look for the fault in some peculiarity of the commander (cheers), and not in the deficiency of the crew. I think it is high time that some protest was made against this attempt to foist a new dictatorship upon us, against the pretensions to infallibility which are set up by some Ministerial supporters. Gentlemen, believe me, that is a dangerous doctrine. It is repugnant to all true Liberalism. If it were ever accepted, you would find it more disastrous to you than the tyranny of kings or the autocracy of popes. We have had some experience of it in connection with another country—our neighbours in France. They also set up a dictatorship. Your neighbours in France have a constitution which,

in some respects, is much more democratic than our own. They enjoy a suffrage more extensive even than that which has recently been conceded to the United Kingdom, but they thought fit to shift their responsibility on to the shoulders of one man; and what was the result? Their territory was invaded, hundreds and thousands of the flower of their population perished in one of the greatest wars of our time. The third Napoleon was a man of mystery. No one knew where he was going. And we are also called upon to deal with a policy which is mysterious. We cannot obtain from any member of the Government, and least of all from its chief, any intelligible account of the policy upon which he asks us to pronounce. We are fighting with a shadow. We want facts upon which we may decide. We want a policy which we may criticise, which we may approve, or which we may reject. And we have in place of it vague declarations of principle and empty but specious phrases.

Facts and Phrases.

Now, I want you to consider with me carefully and argumentatively some of the phrases which have done so much duty in the course of the present election. One is that we "ought to trust the people." That is an excellent phrase. I wish Mr. Gladstone had trusted the people a little more, and that he had not tried to rush this Bill through the House of Commons without, in the first instance, submitting it to full discussion and consideration by the people (cheers). When we are told to trust the people, that means we are to trust the people of Ireland. Have we not trusted them? I believe no people have ever been so trusted under similar circumstances. The Irish people enjoy all your liberties, all your freedom, everything which you prize, all that you find necessary to your orderly existence. But, more than that, the Irish people have their full—ay, more than full—representation. They are represented out of proportion to their population, and greatly out of proportion to the taxation that they pay (cheers). They have their place and influence in the supreme Parliament at Westminster, and how great their influence is some have good reason to know (laughter). I venture to say that if they would

appeal to that Parliament they would find there a vast majority of people, without distinction of party, prepared and anxious to do justice, to remove any remaining grievances that can be shown to exist; anxious to meet their wishes, to concede their demands, so far as those wishes and demands are consistent with the interests of the great kingdom of which they are only a fraction (cheers). But that is not what the Government mean by trusting Ireland. They mean to take them out of this great Parliament and to give them a rival Parliament of their own, although they know that Parliament will be filled by the men who are subsidized by foreign gold, and will be sent there with the funds and to represent the views of the authors—the American authors—of assassination literature (cheers), and the promoters of outrage and violence. I must say for myself I do not call this trusting the people of Ireland. I call it the betrayal of the people of England (cheers).

Justice to Ireland.

Then there is another phrase which has also been used again and again in some of those letters of which I have already spoken. It is said that Ireland asks justice at our hands, and that we ought to concede it. Who is there here who would for a moment refuse justice to Ireland? (no one.) I think that, on the whole, Ireland has had more justice than England, and Wales, and Scotland. I can tell you some very important points in which, at all events in my judgment, Ireland is better off than the sister country. Ireland enjoys complete religious equality. That is more than we can say for England and Wales. In Ireland the land laws have been reformed; in Ireland every tenant has security in his holding: he has fixity of tenure and the right of free sale. Why, I am told there are thousands and tens of thousands of your countrymen in Wales, small tenants, who would give their eyes, so to speak, to have the same laws for Wales which we have freely conceded for Ireland (cheers). It is not in these things that our injustice consists. It consists in the imposition on Ireland of a foreign law, to which some Irishmen object. We have made laws, not for Ireland alone, but for the whole of the United King-

dom, against murder, against outrage, and against theft (cheers). And these things embarrass the National League (laughter and cheers). The National League would treat the Ten Commandments very scurvily (hear, hear). It would affix conditions to most of them, and I am not sure that it would not abolish the eighth of them altogether (laughter and cheers). When I hear this complaint of foreign law—of law which is intended only for the protection of the weak, for security against crime—when I am told that this is the cause of the discontent in Ireland, I think of the story of the sluttish housemaid when her mistress complained that she left the cobwebs in the room of which she had charge. The housemaid said it was not her fault, but that of the nasty sun, which was always showing the dirty corners (laughter). When the Government talk of giving justice to Ireland, the justice they would give is the justice of the National League, than which I do not believe it possible to conceive of a more shameful or more degrading tyranny (cheers). If you are going to suffer such a policy as this, then the only result will be that you will surrender to their enemies all that is most industrious, intelligent, and loyal in Ireland, and that you will commit a shameful and disgraceful crime—you will desert your fellow-workers and co-religionists in the province of Ulster (cheers).

The Claims of Ulster.

I want you to consider for a moment the state of things in Ulster and the claims of that province. I speak of Ulster, because in Ulster there is a majority of Protestants, and specially because it is that province which gives the most strenuous opposition to the policy of the Government (cheers). At the same time I do not leave out of sight the numberless minorities, not always Protestant, but loyal Roman Catholics —the numberless minorities, scattered up and down Ireland, who would be also unprotected. Who are these men who appeal to you? They are not "the classes." Ulster is a poor province, with a bad soil, and the vast majority of the population is poor. A great number of them are workers in the factories, and the remainder are all employed upon the land.

But they are industrious, hard-working men who ask you to help them. Their industry has been the brightest spot in the history of Ireland. One of the great difficulties with which we have to deal in Ireland is the absence of any manufacturing industry. The habits of the people and the nature of the country have led the great majority to seek their subsistence from the soil. But in one quarter of Ireland you have a great industry, which has been built up, established, and maintained, and which holds its own against the world. That industry is now denounced by the Parnellite party. The linen industry of Belfast is declared to be a curse to Ulster. Do you wonder that the men who derive their livelihood from it are alarmed at the prospect of a Parliament in which those who denounce this industry would have a majority? As working men, they ask you to protect their labour; as Protestants, they ask you to see that no injustice is done to their religion. You know that here in Wales—I do not know how it may be in Cardiff, but certainly in Wales generally, the vast majority of the people are opposed to State establishments. But how would you like to get rid of the Protestant State Church and find the Roman Catholic State Church substituted for it? That, in my opinion would be the certain result—one of the first results—of the establishment of a rival Parliament in Dublin. And why would it be so? Just bear in mind this critical distinction between the Protestant and Catholic Church. The Protestant Church is founded upon the principle of toleration. It admits —I do not think it always practises (laughter)—the principle of religious equality. The Catholic Church, by the necessity of the case, is opposed to toleration, and repudiates the doctrine of religious equality. Consequently, if the Catholic Church is anywhere in the majority it must try—I will not blame it for what is a part of its duty and faith—to obtain supremacy. We are told that we are reviving religious bigotry when we speak of these things. We are not; but we are not going to blind ourselves to facts, and it seems to me that those of us who are anxious here in England to remove every shred of religious ascendency—we who gave the heartiest support to Mr. Gladstone when he disestablished the Irish Church, which consti-

tuted an injustice to our Roman Catholic fellow subjects—we, I say, have the right to be the first to protest against the possibility of a new religious ascendency being substituted in its place (cheers). But then it is said that it will be impossible to establish a Church, because that is prohibited by the Government Bill. Well, I believe it is a doubtful matter. Lawyers do not agree whether the Bill does prohibit it or not. But, in any case, I will venture to say that the prohibition is a paper prohibition (laughter), and not worth the paper which it is written upon (cheers). Do you think for a moment that if you set up a Parliament with the functions of a Parliament and the ambition of a Parliament it will rest contented with your restrictions and provisions? Will it cease from working until it has removed them, until it becomes, in fact as well as in name, an independent governing authority?

THE RIGHT OF IRISHMEN TO MANAGE THEIR OWN AFFAIRS.

But I want to point out to you that this prohibition, this attempted prohibition, is altogether inconsistent with another of the phrases to which I have referred. We are told now that it is our duty to allow the Irish people to manage their own affairs. Well, why did not the Government allow them to manage their own affairs? Why did they prohibit them from establishing a Church of their own? Why do they interfere with them at every step? Why prevent them from securing the religious arrangements which they prefer? Why restrict their control of education? Why take from them everything which concerns trade and navigation? Why, above all, do they not allow them to settle their own account with their own landlords? (cheers.) I do not believe in these restrictions. I believe, on the contrary, that if we are to accept any such policy as that promoted by the Government, we should be much wiser men to go in at once for separation. You might cut Ireland adrift altogether, and a pretty mess she would make of her affairs then (laughter and cheers). I do not advise it. I do not approve it. I think it would be to the danger of England, but you might do it with less difficulty and danger than by giving Ireland a mongrel constitution (laughter and cheers),

which will never satisfy her full demands, and will only be a fulcrum for further agitation. I referred just now to the Land Bill. The Government are so little inclined to trust the Irish to manage their own affairs with a Parliament of their own that they take from the Irish Parliament the most important and vital business with which they could possibly have to deal.

The Land Bill—Is it Dead?

We are told, however, that that is all past (laughter), that the Land Bill is dead (renewed laughter). I do not like these mock deceases (much laughter). The Government cannot drop the policy of the Land Bill. Be not deceived. Mr. Gladstone has said it is an obligation of honour. It would be dishonourable to Mr. Gladstone to suggest that he could ever put aside as a matter of political Parliamentary tactics what he, the leading statesman of the Liberal party, has declared to be an obligation of honour. If he were to do it, he would break his Cabinet into pieces,—what remains of it (laughter and cheers),—as he has already shattered his party. The moment he were to announce that the Land Bill or its policy were dropped, he would lose the services of Lord Spencer and Mr. John Morley, who have declared the Land Bill an essential part of their policy. Therefore, you may make up your minds to this—that the Government cannot, and will not, play fast and loose with their policy. If you give them a majority, the Home Rule Bill, practically as it was before, will be reintroduced into Parliament, and, if passed, will drag the Land Bill with it. The consequences of that I have no doubt have been made sufficiently clear in the course of the present contest. It will involve a liability of 150 millions at the least—possibly 200 millions—a sum as great as that imposed as a fine on France for her defeat in the great war with Germany, and that will burden you as the French millions have burdened the Republic of France. That is the price you are asked to pay for the policy of the Government for giving justice to Ireland, for enabling the Irish to manage their own affairs (laughter)—in other words, for allowing the enemies of England to set up a rival Parliament in Dublin (cheers). I have opposed this Bill (renewed cheers), I offered

my resignation in the first place upon this Bill, and I will oppose it or any similar policy to the end of the chapter (cheers). I oppose it in the interests of the working classes, upon whom this burden will ultimately fall. I tell you I do not like the outlook at the present time, or the prospects of our country. Trade is depressed, and I see no hope of improvement. Wages have fallen, and I do not think they have touched bottom, and I do not think this is the time to invest 150 millions on the security of Irish land (hear, hear). This is not the time to speculate with resources that we may want for our own people (hear, hear).

NOT A FINAL SETTLEMENT.

Now, there is one other phrase with which I propose to deal before I sit down. It is said that this policy will be a final settlement of the Irish difficulty (laughter). I do not wonder that many have been carried away by such promises. The Irish difficulty has been with us for many years. It has interfered with our domestic business; it has hindered our domestic business; it has harassed our statesmen; it has shamed us in the eyes of the world (hear, hear). And now an appeal is made to your selfishness and cowardice; you are asked to throw off the obligations of Empire, you are told that you have failed and must fail in the duty, and you are asked to wash your hands of the whole business and cut Ireland adrift. By whom are you asked to do this? By the man who has already, on more than one occasion, dealt with the Irish question. Mr. Gladstone once spoke of the upas tree which was blasting Ireland's prosperity, and asked his supporters to make one great and manful effort to seal up the sources of Irish discontent. He carried the Irish Church Bill and the Irish Land Bill, and since then great improvements have been made in connection with University education. But only eleven years passed after this great and final effort, and we were asked to make another manful effort to seal up the sources of Irish discontent (laughter). Another Land Bill was brought in to correct the evils of the former measure. But now other evils come upon us. Only five years have elapsed since the passing

of this second Land Bill, and again we are called upon to make another final effort (laughter). I want to know what reason we have to believe that this effort will be any more successful than the last? The mistakes which were made in 1870 and 1881 did not touch the existence of the Empire. They, therefore, can be repaired; they were revocable if they turned out unsuccessful. But this step you are are now asked to take, if it is a mistake, will be fatal; it is irrevocable; you cannot go back; you will hand over all the authority of the country to other hands, and you will have yielded yourselves completely into the hands of your enemies. Remember that you are not dealing now with the free opinion of the Irish people,—not even the free opinion of those three and a half millions whose votes returned the eighty-six members to Parliament,—but with men who, it is notorious, receive the funds and therefore take their cues from the enemies of England in the United States of America. They take their cues from their foreign paymasters. You may believe me, those gentleman would not find the money unless they were able to direct the policy.

An American-Irish Policy.

Are you going to allow Great Britain to be ruled from America by the American-Irish of that country? (no.) I saw a statement the other day which filled me with amazement and regret. It was made by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, the Secretary for War, and it was that, although Mr. Gladstone had not been in communication with the Irish-American chiefs in America, yet that he had placed himself in a position to know their opinions and receive their suggestions. I can hardly believe that this can be true, although it comes with the authority of a Secretary of State. If it were true, it would appear that the Prime Minister of England, who did not consult the people, who ignored his own party, and did not take his friends and colleagues into his confidence, has, nevertheless, been willing to receive suggestions from the chiefs of the American party, whose motives are hostility to Great Britain, and whose methods are the assassination of her statesmen, the destruction of her public buildings, and the wholesale outrage which spares neither sex nor age

(great cheering). But if this has been done in England's name England must repudiate it. Gentlemen, your ancestors have met great difficulties and dangers, and have confronted them successfully. They have resisted the tyranny of kings; they have borne without flinching the terrors of a persecuting Church; they have again and again rolled back the tide of foreign invasion from our shores; they have overcome the most powerful combination of their foes; and now will you, their descendants, —you upon whose shoulders the burden of their Empire has fallen—will you be so poor-spirited as to break up your ancient Constitution, to destroy your venerable Parliament, and to surrender your well-earned supremacy to the vile and ignoble forces of anarchy and disorder? (Loud and prolonged cheers, in the midst of which the right hon. gentleman resumed his seat.)

RAWTENSTALL, July 8th, 1886.

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER.

[Lord Hartington's re-election for Rossendale was opposed by a local Liberal who stood as a thick and thin supporter of Mr. Gladstone's policy. Mr. Chamberlain was invited by Lord Hartington's Committee to address two meetings of the constituency in support of his lordship's candidature. The following speech was addressed to a crowded meeting at Rawtenstall. Lord Hartington was returned with a majority of 1,450.]

Thirty Years of Loyal Service.

When Mr. Brooks, who, I think, is the president of Lord Hartington's committee, wrote to me the other day to say that he would be glad if I would attend a couple of meetings in your division, and that he thought you men of Rossendale would be willing to hear what I had to say upon the greatest of all the great questions that have ever yet been brought before the consideration of the United Kingdom (hear, hear), I told him that I would gladly come among you (cheers). I know—alas! who can ignore the fact?—that there are at the present time grievous divisions among the Liberal party. I have made in my time some sacrifices—I have done all in my power to bring the Liberal party together, to strengthen that potent instrument for reform and progress, and there is no man living who deplores more earnestly the divisions which now sever our ranks (hear, hear). They must be serious indeed when an opposition is directed against the candidature of Lord Hartington as member for Rossendale (hear, hear). It is not that there might not be differences of opinion between some of his constituents and himself. I also have my differences with Lord Hartington.

Why, at the last election, we differed about a good number of things, and on that occasion we carried through a very active, but I will say not an unfriendly, controversy. I do not think that I converted Lord Hartington, and I am quite sure he did not convert me (laughter). But our differences at the last election were slight and insignificant compared with that great issue which now binds us together. We differed then about details of Liberal policy, about the nature, about the time and the order, and perhaps to some extent about the character, of Liberal reforms. Now we are agreed in our determination, as far as our power goes, to maintain the integrity of this great country (cheers), and we are determined to refuse to surrender to their enemies the loyal, and the industrious, and the orderly subjects of the Queen (loud cheers). But, gentlemen, even if our differences were more serious than they were at the last election, I confess that if I were an elector of Rossendale I should think twice, I should think thrice, before I rejected Lord Hartington as my representative (cheers). Lord Hartington has given thirty years of loyal service to the Liberal party (cheers). Is that to go for nothing with the men of Lancashire? (no.) Is there no political gratitude? (no, no, and yes.) Some one says "No" (laughter). All I can say is that, if there is no gratitude in Lancashire, Lancashire differs from every other similar constituency in the kingdom (cheers). I have always maintained that a democracy was generous and true—true to those who had served it, true and loyal to those who had proved themselves to be its friends, and I will not believe, until I see the evidence, that Lancashire has belied the rest of the country (cheers). Your member—and recollect I am speaking of a man from whom, as I have said, I have often differed—has always been by common consent straightforward and sincere. He has been honest, he has been proved to be generous to his opponents, true to his friends (hear, hear). I say these are things which I hope the English people will never undervalue, never underestimate, and that they will insure a large majority for Lord Hartington—a majority which will be swelled even by those who happen to differ from him on one point (cheers). It would be a monstrous thing, after such

services as I have described, if now, having remained as he has remained, absolutely true to all the pledges that he has given to you, to every profession that he has made, not having changed, having shown no shadow of turning since you invited him six months ago to become your representative—it would not, I say, be creditable to the constituency of Rossendale if you were now to dismiss him summarily from your service (cheers).

A Momentous Issue.

Now, gentlemen, if you will bear with me, for I am told not to make a long speech, I want to turn to the real issue—the question upon which this election is being fought, the great question which has been suddenly sprung upon the constituency (cheers), and of the intention to discuss which I will venture to say there is not one man in this room can get up and say he had any idea at the last election (cheers). I have objected to the policy of the Government, to the two Bills which were introduced into the House of Commons, because I believe that they would be fatal to the true interests of Ireland quite as much as to the interests of Great Britain. I cannot deal with so great and complicated a question in a single speech, and especially I cannot deal with it to-night. I have, after I leave you, to speak at another meeting at some distance away. Therefore, if you will excuse me, I will say nothing about what is an important part of the question—the interests of Ireland. I will reserve that for a subsequent occasion. I will speak about the interests of Great Britain in this matter (hear, hear). After all we have some concern in Great Britain. It is rather a considerable place (laughter). It has made a great noise in the world, and I think the majority of us would be very sorry if its influence were destroyed, if its authority were to disappear. It has played a great part in the civilization of the world, in the promotion of liberty and freedom; and anything which would weaken it would be, I believe, something more than a national calamity. Now, I ask you what are the interests of Great Britain in this question which has been raised? An appeal has been made to you, really to your impatience and your fears. You have been told that if you do not concede to Ireland what

it is said that Ireland demands—demands, that is, through the mouths of Mr. Parnell and the American-Irish—you are told that if you do not concede their demands, all your business will be obstructed, that there will be outrages in Ireland and in your midst, that you and I may be blown up (laughter), or otherwise provided for (renewed laughter), and that in any case you will not get any work in which you are interested through the House of Commons; that there will be eighty-six members there who will prevent all legislation in which England, Scotland, and Wales have a legitimate interest. This appeal comes to us quite as a new thing. Hitherto all our statesmen—and none of them more forcibly, more eloquently, than the greatest of them, the present chief of the Liberal party—have urged upon us that if we would only remove the grievances, the material grievances, of Ireland, that if we would continue patient and persevering in well-doing, all disaffection and agitation would cease, and Ireland would become what Scotland now is, one of the most loyal portions of the Empire (hear, hear). Now just think of this. For sixty years after the union between Scotland and England, Scotland was just as discontented, and with more reason, than Ireland, and Scotland was pretty well able to hold its own; Scotland very nearly conquered England (cheers). There are some people who say that she has conquered England, because there are so many Scotchmen in all our principal positions (laughter); but in any case the discontent between Scotland and England was as great—as serious—as the discontent between Ireland and England. By proper conduct, and by mutual consideration, by concessions on both sides, all that has been removed, as I have told you, and you know that Scotland is no longer a hostile nation. It is, indeed, animated by a national sentiment as praiseworthy, as honourable, and as distinct as ever animated the breasts of any people; but it glories in being a part of the greater country to which it is proud to belong (cheers). But this is what we have been hoping for, what we Radicals have been anxiously desiring, what we have been asking for. I have said, Let us go on, never mind however unreasonable they are, however violent the Irish may be, or a certain portion of them, let us go on to seek

out their grievances, to remedy them one by one, and at last we shall touch their hearts, and at last they will be one with us, as Scotchmen are one with Englishmen (cheers). But now we are told we are to give all that up, that all our work and labour for the past thirty years is to be thrown aside. We are to treat it as having been on the wrong lines, and we are to begin again on new lines; we are to give up any idea of uniting the three countries together into a whole; we are to give up that glorious idea for the democracy. There are people who say we are no longer deserving of the name of Radicals and Liberals (a voice—"It is true"). You say so?

The Highest Idea of Democracy.

Well, let us argue the question (cheers). We are no longer Radicals and Liberals, forsooth, because we refuse to break up the integrity of the country. Why, I believe that the highest idea of the democracy is the union of the people (cheers). That is the tendency of the Radical voice and of public sentiment. We do not want to see new custom houses, and new divisions created; we want to bring the people nearer together in one universal country. This is why we object to this arrangement for throwing up the Union between Ireland and England, which I am sure would lead to the creation of a new and a hostile and independent country within thirty miles of our shores (cheers).

The Pretensions of a Parliament and the Functions of a Vestry.

No doubt there is one point of view from which these proposals may appear tempting. If we could only wash our hands of all this Irish difficulty by cutting them adrift, and floating the island off a thousand miles, there would be something to say for it. But if you have followed me so far, you will see that my view is that you will be creating for yourselves greater difficulties, and that you are bound to undertake the responsibility of your condition—you cannot get rid of the fact and all its consequences, that this Ireland is here within a few miles of our shores. We have interests there from which we cannot cut ourselves adrift; and, believe me, if you were to grant this

wish called Home Rule—I do not call it Home Rule, I say that I am a Home Ruler—I say that if you were to accept the policy of the Government I believe you would only increase your obligations, the difficulties in your way, and the obstacles which now stand between you and the realization of your hopes. One thing might be a matter for argument. It might be contended that absolute separation would be a good thing. I have not, of course, seen the speeches which have been made by the gentleman who is opposing Lord Hartington; but I daresay he has said what other Liberals of the same persuasion have said—that nothing on earth would induce him to consent to separation, and that that is not before us. But I say this, for my part, that a great deal more can be said in favour of separation than in favour of such a Bill as we had to consider last session (cheers). Cut the Irish adrift altogether; let them manage their own affairs (laughter). Let them try to manage their own affairs (laughter). I can quite well understand that many people might think that, on the whole, it would be a valuable experience to them (hear, hear). But to give to them an independent Parliament, a legislative authority, which has the pretensions of a Parliament and the functions of a vestry—no, that will never succeed (hear, hear). That will only be a half-way house to something else, and will only be a cause of agitation and a fulcrum on which the enemies of England may raise a measure which is to injure us ("nonsense," laughter, and cheers). There is a gentleman there who knows all about it (laughter). He has settled the question; he is willing to risk it (great laughter and cheers). There is a great deal involved in that stake; I am not quite certain whether we shall be willing to back the gentleman there (laughter). He is willing to stake the future of this country, the future of Ireland, upon the chance that such a Parliament as is proposed in the Home Rule Bill of the Government will work well, improve the condition of the Irish people (hear, hear), and will constitute no injury to England (hear, hear). I say for myself that I am not willing to run that risk. It is too great (hear, hear), and I believe that all the evidence that we can gather goes to prove that the experiment will be a failure.

THE COLONIES ARE INDEPENDENT.

One thing I am quite certain of is that any such legislative authority as has been proposed would not be accepted as a final settlement. We are told every now and again by gentlemen who have read very little, and know very little of the experience of the case, that we ought to look to our colonies. They say "Look at Canada and Australia," and exclaim, "Why don't you treat Ireland in the same way? Won't she be equally loyal and equally contented?" Now, these gentlemen are citing cases which, on the surface, I think are entirely different. Canada and Australia are thousands of miles away. That is one thing. Under no conceivable circumstance can they possibly cause us danger. Another thing is that in Canada and Australia you have not that great division of classes which has wrought so much difficulty in Ireland (no). The gentleman in the corner says you have them. All I say is, with great deference to his superior knowledge, that I am not aware of it. But I was going to point out to you that there is another thing which you have to bear in mind, that the relations between this country and the self-governing colonies are practically the relations between independent countries. Canada and Australia are quoted. They are nominally our colonies; they are nominally under our rule. Do we govern them? Are they really under the control of Great Britain? Not a bit of it. If you were to attempt to interfere with either of those colonies in the slightest degree they would cut adrift from you to-morrow. Let me take an illustration, and then you will understand the position at once. Suppose we got into a great war—I am afraid it is not altogether an impossible supposition—what would be the position of Canada and Australia? They would have had no part whatever in the policy which led to that war, and they would have no part whatever in finding the cost of that war We should have to send ships, if necessary, to protect them against the enemy with which we were in conflict, but they would not have to find one single farthing of contribution to the cost. (One of the audience here asked who would have to pay the cost if Australia were involved in a war with Russia.) Exactly. If I understand the question of my friend, he says

if there were war between Russia and Australia. But there could not be as long as Australia is a colony; the war would have to be between Russia and England (cheers). I am very glad to have these questions put. I want you to understand this thing, and I want to argue it out with you, and if you do not understand anything I say I hope you will interrupt me. The question asked me is a very plain one, and a very reasonable one. Suppose we were at war with Russia—that is as good a case as any other—what would be the position of Australia? The position would be this. Russia might send a fleet to attack Australia because we were at war with Russia. We should have to defend Australia, but Australia would have had no part in the policy which led to that war with Russia, and Australia would not pay a penny towards the cost of that war. But there are very many people who believe that the result would be, if we ever got into a war, that the relations between us and our colonies would be so strained that they would break adrift altogether, and I think it is not altogether impossible. My point is this, that these colonies are connected with us by ties which are really very loose, and if we got into a war or anything of that kind practically they would break adrift and become separate countries. Is that the position that you want Ireland to occupy at the present moment? Ireland is a part of the United Kingdom, has a part in our sorrows and a part in our joys, shares in our privileges and shares in our obligations. Do you wish that to be changed, and Ireland to become a separate country whenever the Irish think fit? That is the position of Australia and Canada. If to-morrow any one of the Legislative Assemblies of the different provinces in Australia were to pass a resolution that they desired to be separate, do you suppose that we should send an army to compel them to remain as they are? Not a bit of it. The tie which binds us to Australia is a sentimental tie. That is very valuable, and I hope it may long continue to exist. But I hope more than that. I hope we may be able to strengthen it; I hope we may be able sooner or later to federate, to bring together, all these great dependencies of the British Empire into one supreme and Imperial Parliament (cheers), so that they should be all units

of one body, that one should feel what the others feel, that all should be equally responsible, that all should have a share in the welfare, and sympathise with the welfare of every part. That is what I hope, but there is very little hope for it if you weaken the ties which now bind the central portion of the Empire together (cheers).

A Stepping-stone to Separation.

Now, I have endeavoured to point out to you why I think an arrangement of the kind proposed to us would not be a final arrangement. It would be, as I say, a mere stepping-stone to separation—a mere stepping-stone to the arrangement which exists between ourselves and such a colony as Canada, which is the loosest possible tie which can connect two separate countries. But, although it would not be a final settlement, it would be a very dangerous halting-point. What is it you are giving? If you create this Parliament in Dublin, who will be the members of that Parliament? (a voice—"Irishmen.") Well, that is not necessary. They might be Scotchmen or Englishmen, but they would have to be elected by Irishmen. I will tell you who they would be (a voice—"Sexton"). He is a very good man (hear, hear). I have nothing to say against him; he is one of the most eloquent Irishmen I have ever heard; and although I do not agree with him, I have no complaint to make of him (laughter). But what I have to say is this, that the Irish Parliament would consist, as far as a large majority of its members are concerned, of men elected by the National League (hear, hear). You know what the National League is. Have you read or thought of the condition of affairs in Ireland which has been brought about by the National League, and by its predecessor, the Land League? The Land League was suppressed by Mr. Gladstone; the National League took its place. What did Mr. Gladstone say—I quote him as the best authority—about the Land League? He said that the steps of the Land League were dogged with crime; he said that the leaders of the Land League were preaching a gospel of public plunder; he said that the leaders of the Land League were men who were marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire

(cheers). These are not my words; I am quoting Mr. Gladstone; and it is to men of the same stamp that Mr. Gladstone now proposes to hand over the liberties and the fortunes of your fellow-subjects in Ireland.

THE DYNAMITE CONSPIRACY.

Well, it is a serious question, not a thing to be trifled with; but there are worse things behind. There is something worse than the National League; something worse than the Land League. There are the forces that are behind these two Leagues; there is the agitation in America among the foreign enemies of this country, whose gold has supplied the funds for this agitation. I venture to say that this agitation would have died out long ago had it not been for their money—for the money of Patrick Ford and Egan, the leaders of the Fenian agitation which was the foundation of the outrages in Ireland and outrages in England. Sometimes these men work through Mr. Parnell, sometimes through obstruction in Parliament, sometimes through the knife of the assassin, and through dynamite explosions. Are you going to accept their policy—a policy from these men? (no.) If you are, let us at least be consistent. Let us give these men what they want. They make no mistake. They are clear and distinct in their demands. They tell you that they will not be satisfied until Ireland has become a separate nation, until they have broken the last link between Great Britain and Ireland. Then, I say, give them what they want if you are going to truckle to sedition (cheers). And be sure of this, that until you have done so—I am not certain even after you have done so—it is doubtful whether you will enjoy a moment's peace. Talk about obstruction being removed by concession to the Irish demands; on the contrary, I believe you would give new vigour to obstruction and to agitation. And be sure of this, that you will be subject to constant difficulties; you will have a Parliament in Dublin filled with men whose sole motive is hostility to this country; you will have to defend your ports; you will have to increase your army and navy; you will have to burden yourselves with increased taxation (ironical laughter). Do you doubt it? There is a gentleman

there who smiles at the thought (laughter). He seems to think it is improbable that you will suffer from a hostile country within thirty miles of your shores, in whose Parliament there would be principally discussions upon matters involving the interests of England. Let him consider what happened a year or two ago, when it came like a thunderbolt out of a blue sky. A newspaper raised an alarm, and the powerful Government led by Mr. Gladstone had to yield, and to go to the expense of I do not know how many millions for the navy, which I venture to say at all events the great majority of that Government did not think necessary. And whose taxes are being spent in these panics? Who has to bear the burden? It is not the classes, gentlemen. No, believe me, they can take care of themselves (cheers). It is not they who will seriously suffer. They may sometimes have to give up a luxury here and there, sometimes a hothouse, sometimes a horse, sometimes something of less worth. But you, who have to give up a portion of your wages, a part of your food, you, the working classes of the country, have to suffer whenever taxation of the country is levied unduly (hear, hear, and a voice—"We knew that years ago"). I think there was a gentleman who said, "We knew that years ago"; but if he is prepared to establish a new and an independent and a hostile country in Ireland, I do not think he has profited much by his lesson (laughter and cheers).

There are Loyalists in Ireland.

Now, I do not want to go on too long, or to weary you (voices—"Go on"). But there are two other points (another voice—"Keep on until 12 o'clock"; laughter). There are two other points I want to bring before you, and I will do so briefly as I can. One of them is this, and do, I pray you, remember this point. Ireland is sometimes spoken of as though it were a homogeneous nation, people who are all agreed together, like Greeks, for instance, or Bulgarians, or Montenegrins. This, however, is not the case. There is one-third of the whole population of Ireland at the present time absolutely opposed to this legislation, absolutely hostile to it. They believe that they will suffer in their interest and in their

religious liberties. They believe that this legislation would hand them over to their enemies. Now, have we a right to abandon those people? (hear, hear, and voices—"No.") There is not a doubt that these million and a half of loyal men in Ireland are the most industrious and the most intelligent part of the Irish people. Are you going to hand them over to their enemies? They may be wrong or they may be right. I think they are right. I think that if you lived there, under the circumstances in which they live, you would probably share their fear. But whether right or wrong, I say, are you going to teach this lesson—that their loyalty to England is to be punished with desertion and as a crime? If you do so, the lesson will not stop with Ireland. Remember how this Empire is held together; remember that the rumour of what you are doing has gone to all the countries with which we are connected; remember especially what is likely to be the result of the betrayal of the loyal population of Ireland; remember what is likely to be the result in India. India is the greatest dependency of the British Crown. In dealing with her, you are not dealing with a population of four millions of one kind, and a population of one and a half or two millions of another. We are dealing with 200 millions of men of different races, whose prosperity and happiness have been committed to our charge. Are you going to allow India to manage her own affairs, to use a word which has been so often used in this controversy? Are you going to hand over these 200 millions to the anarchy which would result from the removal of British rule, an anarchy sooner or later to be followed by the establishment of some evil tyranny? (no.) No, you are not going to do that. But are you aware that every word spoken here, and all our actions, are being watched and weighed in that vast dependency? (hear, hear.) How do you hold the situation? How many men have you to control the 200 millions? An armed force of 80,000. Why the mere breath of the people they govern would be sufficient to blow them off the face of the world (laughter). It is not merely by force you govern India. You govern it by the influence which your character has exercised over this Eastern people (cheers). It is by their belief in your constancy and in

your courage, because they believe that Englishmen will never desert a friend, will never turn their backs to a foe (hear, hear). That is why you hold this vast dependency, that is why you keep possession of so many of the fairest portions of the globe. I do not like to appeal to selfishness, but I think you ought to consider that the interests of your class, the interests of your families, and the prosperity of England at this time depend entirely upon the control of our foreign trade, and there is no trade more valuable to us than that of this great dependency of India. The ties which bind us in many cases are loose. Take care you do not make them looser. If the head is weak the extremities will be paralysed, and, gentlemen, the first step in the disruption of the Empire will be followed sooner or later, and at no distant date, by a general dissolution (cheers).

HOME RULE AND LAND PURCHASE ARE INSEPARABLE.

The last point in which I think you have an interest in connection with this policy is the policy of the Land Bill. The Land Bill is an essential part of the Government policy. They do not themselves believe that it would be wise or possible to give self-government to the majority of the Irish people unless they had previously removed the causes of social disorder which are connected with the question of the land. I was reading this morning a speech which was made by the individual who is opposing Lord Hartington, and I must say that I was surprised at some of the things which I read there. He said that the Land Bill was dead and withdrawn. I think he gave his audience reason to infer that they need not discuss it at all, and that it was altogether out of the question (hear, hear). You think so? (great laughter.) Well, why has Mr. Gladstone not said so? (loud cheers.) Now here is a very curious thing. Nobody can say a thing more plainly, more lucidly than the Prime Minister (a voice—"Ireland will settle that"). No! they are not going to be allowed to settle it (laughter and cheers). That is a very different thing. Many of us may, perhaps, be willing to allow Irishmen to settle it for themselves, but it is we who are undertaking to settle it. Mr. Gladstone was challenged again and again in the House of Commons, and

since the announcement of the dissolution has been challenged again and again, to say plainly whether his policy of the Land Bill was withdrawn or not. We know the Bill is dead. Parliament is dead, and all the Bills are dead with it (laughter and cheers). I want to know whether it will be revived (hear, hear). I want to know whether Mr. Gladstone himself has become convinced that the policy of the Land Bill was a mistake, and that it is given up. If he would say so, for my own part, I should hear it with delight and satisfaction (hear, hear). He has never said so, or said anything of the kind, but has allowed the prominent members of the Government, Mr. John Morley and Lord Spencer, two of the most valuable members of the Government, without contradiction, to say that they considered it an essential part of the Government policy. Mr. Morley said he would never allow the Irish Parliament to settle this question without the help of the Parliament of Great Britain. It is deceiving you and the public of Great Britain for any man to say that the Land Bill can be treated as if it did not exist. It represents the intention of the Government, and if they had a majority—if the country should carry a Home Rule Bill, I am as certain as that I am here that the Land Bill, much the same as before, would reappear, and that they would have the policy of that Bill to debate. Mr. Newbiggin said another thing. He complained of me, and said some rather unkind things of me (a laugh). I pass that over. I am accustomed to those compliments (laughter and cheers), and I shall not say anything unkind of Mr. Newbiggin. He said it was very wrong of Mr. Chamberlain to refer again and again to the Land Bill and to say that it involved a charge of 150 or 200 millions to the British people, when Mr. Gladstone said it only involved 50 millions. Mr. Gladstone did not say so. Mr. Gladstone said that he had reduced his estimate, and that all he would ask Parliament for at the present time was 50 millions. But that is like giving a series of bills, one at one month, another at two, and another at three months (laughter). When you have had the bill of one month, that does not settle the bill of two months or the one of three months (hear, hear).

TWENTY YEARS' PURCHASE OR A BULLET.

They will come in time (laughter). Mr. Gladstone has not altered, and does not intend to alter, the principle of his Bill or the nature of his offer, and I tell you that if that offer is made to Ireland it will involve you in a charge of 150 millions at the very least. I will tell you how it stands. Mr. Gladstone offers a number of the Irish landowners to purchase their land at twenty years' purchase of the net rent. That is the present plan. If every landowner accepts that offer, the amount is estimated to be over 200 millions. Mr. Newbiggin said the landowners had refused the offer. They have never refused it. It has never been made to them (hear, hear). How can they refuse a thing which does not become a substantial offer until Parliament has passed the Bill? (hear, hear.) When Parliament has passed the Bill, then is the time for landowners to refuse it, and I will tell you they will not be such fools (great laughter). Why, gentlemen, do you suppose if you had a little property which paid you nothing, or you had a bit of land, and the only rent you could get was a shot from a rifle or a slug from a double-barrelled gun (laughter), you would refuse an offer of twenty years' purchase at the net judicial rent? (laughter.) No; believe me, the landowners will accept this offer almost to a man, and if not voluntarily they will be compelled to accept it by the circumstances of the case. If one man accepts the other must accept. If the neighbouring occupiers have all become owners, he cannot hope to collect rent from those who remain his tenants against their will. Depend upon it, the landowners will accept it, and if we were told that 200 millions would be required, it would be much nearer the truth. Then Mr. Newbiggin said the Bill was dead, but goes on to argue every bit of it. He is more Gladstonian than Mr. Gladstone. Somebody else thinks it is safe. Well, I should not in the least object to that gentleman investing his money, and I should wish him joy of his speculations, but I do not want to invest mine—(cheers)—and I do not want to invest yours.

YOU LEND YOUR MONEY AND TAKE YOUR CHANCE.

Just consider what the security is. What does it depend

upon? It depends upon two things—upon Irish revenue and upon Irish rents. I do not think much of Irish revenue. The Irish revenue, which will be under the control of the English Government, will be a revenue from customs and excise; but that revenue is already pledged. A greater part of it is already pledged for the contribution of Ireland to the army and navy and to her share of the debt. The balance is a very small balance. And it depends upon the comparative consumption of whisky and other excisable articles. If another Father Mathew should come to Ireland he might reduce the consumption of whisky and reduce the Irish revenue (laughter); but the main security is Irish rents. They are to be paid by tenants who have been taught, for I know not how long, that the payment of rent is an immoral thing; that they ought to have their land for nothing, or for prairie value, or for three years' purchase, or something of that kind (laughter). The Irish Parliament is to force them to pay their rents. The Irish Parliament will be elected by men who do not want to pay their rents. What a happy state of things! (cheers.) What a happy state of things for the investors! They are to get their rents from men who do not want to pay them; and these men are to be compelled to pay them by the help of gentlemen who have told them not to pay (cheers). I am convinced that a speculation of this kind is certain to end in loss. I say that in the present condition of the country I, for one, am not willing to pledge its resources—to pledge the taxation, not of ourselves, but of our children and children's children for all time; to pledge it for such a purpose; to pledge it in such a way (cheers).

Summing Up.

I have occupied your time much longer than I anticipated (cheers, and—"Go on"). Let me sum up the points that I have endeavoured to bring before you. In the first place I do not believe that any arrangement such as that which has been proposed is likely to be a final settlement. I say it will increase your difficulties; it will increase the obstacles in the way of the legislation which I, at all events, have devoted the greater part of my political life to advocate. I say in the second place that

you ought to refuse to burden yourself and your children with a debt of millions for the benefit of Irish landlords, a class which is not particularly deserving of your sympathy. I say, in the third place, that it would be a shameful thing, and more than that it would be disastrous to the true interests of this country, if you were to desert the people who rely upon your loyalty, to desert your fellow-workmen, your fellow-religionists, the loyal minority in Ireland (cheers). I further say that it would be a grievous mistake if you were to set up a rival Parliament in Dublin. I do not say that it would be a mistake to give self-government to Ireland. I have always advocated it in the strongest possible language. I want self-government for Ireland. I want it for England; I want it for Wales; and I want it for Scotland, and we have not got it yet (cheers). But it is a totally different thing to give to these people absolute control over their local affairs, and to set up a rival Parliament which will certainly endeavour to become an independent Parliament, and which will be a hostile Parliament. And above all it would be shameful to do this thing, to run these risks, to entail upon yourselves and your children these heavy burdens, at the bidding of men who are the enemies of England—the men who have promoted outrage in your midst, the men who have been the authors of the great majority of the crimes which have desolated Ireland. Remember, as I have told you, that the basis of this demand is not to be found in the free opinion of the Irish people; it is to be found in the suggested agitation of the American-Irish. They are not the friends of this country; it is not from them that our statesmen ought to take their policy, and I hope you will show by your vote at the election that you respect independence, that you honour courage, that you have faith in those who are true to their pledges and their promises, and that in this great Irish question, while you are prepared to do all that can be done to remove the material grievances of your fellow-subjects in Ireland, you will do nothing to allow the enemies of England to cause injury to the great interests that we have under our charge (loud cheers).

HOUSE OF COMMONS, August 26th, 1886.

AFTER THE VICTORY.

[On August 26th, 1886, Mr. Parnell moved an amendment to the Address as follows:

"At the end of the last paragraph to add the words, 'And humbly to assure Her Majesty that we fear that, owing to the heavy fall in the price of agricultural produce, the greatest difficulty will be experienced in the coming winter by the Irish tenant farmers in the payment of their present rents, and many will be unable to pay these rents. That numerous evictions, confiscating the rights vested in the tenants by the Land Act of 1881, causing widespread suffering and endangering the maintenance of social order, will be the result. That we deprecate any attempt to transfer the loss likely to arise due to inability to pay the present rents from the owners of land to the taxpayers of Great Britain and Ireland, by any extension of State-assisted purchase on the basis of rents fixed when prices were higher than they now are.'"]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—Sir, I think that the hon. member for Cork, I do not know whether intentionally or not, has placed those who follow him in a position of considerable embarrassment. He has proposed an amendment which I venture to say is incomplete and inconclusive. He has introduced it in a speech which was a very powerful speech, which was very full, very frank, and very complete; but by the rules of the House, inasmuch as the speech travelled very widely beyond the terms of the amendment, we are unable to deal with many important portions of that speech, and we are confined absolutely to matters which are relevant to the terms of the amendment. The amendment consists of two parts, to neither of which, treated solely as an abstract proposition, have I myself any great objection to take. The first part of the amendment

expresses in somewhat hesitating language an apprehension that there may be considerable difficulty during the coming autumn and winter in the payment of rent, that that may lead to evictions, and that the evictions may endanger public order. Well, sir, the only remark I have to make upon that is that I think, having regard to what we have been told in the course of this debate as to the enormous prices still being paid for the tenant-right of these properties, that the terms of the amendment are a little too general. I do not think it can be asserted that the tenants of Ireland, speaking of them as a class, are unable to pay their rents in consequence of the fall in prices (Ministerial cheers). It may well be, and I should not see the slightest objection to the expression of the apprehension, that a portion, a minority at all events, of these tenants may be placed in considerable difficulty.

A Superfluous Amendment.

But what I object to is that it is unnecessary and superfluous to make a statement of that kind in answer to a speech from the throne (Ministerial cheers). And I say that because I think it will be agreed that it is not the practice of the House to make affirmations of that kind unless they are prepared at the same time to recommend some remedy for the state of things which they fear. The case of the Irish tenant is not the only case in regard to which similar apprehensions might with equal truth be expressed. There are many cases which might suggest themselves to hon. members. I will only mention one. We might address Her Majesty and say that we fear that during the coming autumn and winter the depression of trade which has continued so long will lead to a lack of employment and be productive of great suffering, and that it will endanger social order. That would be perfectly true, and my only objection to an addition of that kind to the Address would be that it would be useless and improper to make it unless the House were determined to deal with the subject-matter and find a full, complete, and satisfactory remedy (Ministerial cheers). The second part of the amendment is in the nature of what I may call an anticipatory repudiation

of a policy which finds no expression whatever in the Queen's Speech, and the existence of which is denied absolutely by the members of the Government in this House. We know perfectly well what is the meaning of the last paragraph of the amendment. It has reference, no doubt, to a sentence in a speech which was reported to have been spoken in another place by the head of the Government. According to the rules of this House we are not entitled to discuss matters which pass in another place, and, I admit, for a very good reason, because the speakers are not here to answer for themselves and to give the necessary explanations or corrections of what they may have been reported to have said. Well, sir, all I will say in addition at the present moment is that I also deprecate any attempt to transfer the loss which may fall upon the landlords owing to circumstances of the seasons or to other matters to the pockets of the British taxpayer (Ministerial cheers). I have deprecated it before. I will deprecate it again. I do not believe that the Government would be so foolish as to make any proposition of the kind. If they ever do, all I can say is that by whatsoever Government it may be made, and in whatsoever circumstances, I shall be bound by what I have said in the past and by my present opinions to offer to it my most strenuous opposition. But that is one thing. As an abstract proposition it may be very well; but, on the other hand, I am not going to vote for an amendment, the carrying of which would be equivalent to a vote of censure upon the Government (loud Irish and Opposition cheers).

THERE SHALL BE NO MISTAKE.

Oh yes! I do not wish there to be the slightest mistake (Home Rule cheers). I am not going to do anything to turn out this Government—(ironical Opposition cheers)—so long as the Government which is to take its place is committed to a Separatist policy (loud Ministerial cheers), which I believe would be injurious to the best interests of Ireland and Great Britain (Ministerial cheers). I certainly am not going to vote for an amendment of this kind, which is not only vague and inconclusive, but which in my opinion is disingenuous, and

may properly be described as an unnecessary affirmative and a gratuitous negative.

THE AMENDMENT CONDEMNS MR. GLADSTONE'S POLICY.

Are my friends belonging to the Liberal party who are described as Separatist Liberals—(laughter)—going to vote for this amendment? My right hon. friend the late Prime Minister, who unfortunately is no longer with us (Ministerial laughter), declared before he left the country that if he remained he would not vote for it. I beg my hon. friends from whom on this one point of Irish policy I disagree to consider very carefully what they are doing. I hear some of them saying they are going to vote for this amendment. By so doing they will be giving an hypothetical condemnation of a policy which is more or less attributed to Lord Salisbury, but they are giving an unequivocal and definite condemnation of the policy of their own leader and of the late Government (no, and Ministerial cheers). Oh; but they cannot get out of it (laughter). The amendment deprecates any extension of State-assisted purchase on the basis of rents fixed when prices were higher. But that is the Land Bill of the late Government (Ministerial cheers). The Land Bill of the late Government was an extension of State-assisted purchase. I suppose my hon. friends will agree to that (no, and laughter). There are apparently some persons who will contradict anything (laughter). I am quite sure that none of my right hon. friends who will speak with any sense of responsibility will deny that the Land Bill of the late Government was one for the extension of State-assisted purchase, and that the price of purchase was fixed on the basis of rents when prices were higher than now. If hon. members behind me vote for the amendment, they will give a vote of censure against the policy of the late Government very much more emphatically—(cries of "No," and loud Ministerial cheers)—there are none so blind as those that will not see—(laughter)—a vote of censure much more emphatic and decided against the policy of the late Government than against anything that can properly be attributed to the present Government (cheers).

THE LAND PURCHASE BILL.

I should like to consider what is the present position of the Liberal party with regard to this great question of Land Purchase. What is the position of the leaders of the party? Has my right hon. friend the member for Midlothian abandoned the policy of the Land Bill which he introduced? He was challenged to answer that question again and again in the course of the elections. He never answered it (Ministerial cheers). He has made two speeches during the present Session. He has not said anything on the subject (Ministerial cheers) I know there are Liberal members below the gangway who have insinuated that my right hon. friend is prepared to abandon this policy in the future. Have they forgotten that my right hon. friend has declared the Land Purchase Bill to be an obligation of honour? (loud Ministerial cheers.) What can be more insulting to him than to suggest that for party purposes he would abandon an obligation of honour? (loud Ministerial cheers.) But if my right hon. friend has changed his opinion, what is the position of Lord Spencer and of my right hon. friend the late Chief Secretary? They were bold, honest, and consistent throughout the election. Lord Spencer has said again and again that it would be unfair to the landlords to hand them over entirely to the mercies of the popular party. The Chief Secretary has said again and again that the settlement of the land question was a necessary preliminary to, or at all events that it must accompany, Home Rule. I should like to know, if this is the position of the leaders, what is the position of those whom I am obliged to call Separatist Liberals? (loud Opposition laughter and ironical cheering.) What is their position? As far as it has been expressed in the course of the debate, it is a position of uncompromising hostility to any scheme of land purchase (cries of "No"). Oh yes, as far as it has been expressed in this debate (laughter and cheers). Let hon. gentlemen who are in favour of the land scheme of the late Government get up in their places and say so (laughter). There are precious few of them who would have dared to say so to their constituents (laughter). I want to point out to these hon. gentlemen that their position is a perilous one.

They are Dissentient Liberals (laughter). I beg my hon. friends to take a warning by me (loud laughter). I am to be expelled from the Liberal party (loud Irish cheering). It is not the Irish members who will be able to do it (great Ministerial cheering). I am to be ostracised because I unfortunately was unable to approve of two Bills which were brought in by my right hon. friend the member for Midlothian. Is it to be held that it is a capital crime to oppose two Bills, and a venial eccentricity to oppose one? (laughter and cheers.) No, sir; unless my hon. friends are prepared to swallow the Land Bill, they must go out of the party also. And a very small party will remain; and if my hon. friend the member for Northampton, the new leader of the party—(laughter)—upon whom Elijah's mantle is to fall, but who I think will be found a little too small for that extensive garment—(laughter)—if he is to have his way the Liberal party will become "small by degrees and beautifully less," and one by one, by squads and sections, the Liberal party will disappear, and at last will be reduced to the condition of a sect which I remember to have heard of in my youth, which also bore the ominous name of Separatist—(loud laughter)—and which consisted of two persons, a man and his wife; but the wife was heard to say at times that she had great doubts whether her husband would be saved (renewed laughter). Well, sir, I will turn to the Liberal Unionists. What is their opinion with regard to this question of land purchase? My noble friend the member for Rossendale has expressed his views upon the subject, and every one will recognise, I am sure, that during the election he said nothing which committed him to oppose an extensive scheme of State-aided purchase; but it is supposed by gentlemen who are good enough to quote me, and not accurately (laughter), and to refer to my opinions in the past apparently without having taken the trouble to read what I said—it is asserted by them that I at least am committed, by what I said during the election, to absolute opposition to all State-aided purchase of land. Why, that is the exact opposite of the fact.

THE LAND QUESTION MUST BE SETTLED.

On the contrary, everything I have said has been cordially to support a large system of land purchase ("Oh," from the Irish members). Refer to Hansard (cheers). See what I said in speaking on the second reading of the Land Bill. I said then that I was in favour of a large scheme of land purchase. Why, it was made an accusation against me by some hon. gentlemen who seemed to know Cabinet secrets without being in the Cabinet—(laughter)—that I brought forward a large scheme of land purchase, a scheme almost as extensive in principle as that of my right hon. friend, but more dangerous and with less security to the British taxpayer. However, that is a point I won't argue now (ironical Parnellite cheers). Oh! I will argue it at the proper time (laughter, and Ministerial cheers). I only point to it now to show that, by the evidence of every one who knows best, I have always been, in private and in public, in favour of a great scheme of land purchase. I objected to the scheme of my right hon. friend, and why? Not to the principle of that scheme, and not to the principle of land purchase. No; I have always held that at the bottom of this Irish question is the land question. You cannot deal satisfactorily with the Irish problem unless you can settle agrarian problems first. I believed that no settlement was to be found in the system of dual ownerships, and it was only by the creation of a great scheme of peasant proprietorship, and only by doing what Germany, Russia, Bavaria, and other countries have done for themselves, that we can settle this Irish question. You cannot create peasant proprietorship in Ireland except in one of two ways. Either by vast confiscation of the property of individuals—which, as far as I know, is not advocated by any single member of this House—or, on the other hand, by a great system of State-aided purchase. That, then, is the only practical alternative. I have never denied it; I have always been in favour of it.

UNBELIEVERS CONVERTED.

I was opposed to the scheme of my right hon. friend because I said and thought it involved a risk so tremendous that it

practically amounted to a certainty of loss (cheers). My right hon. friends around me are coming over to my opinion very quickly (no, laughter, and cheers). Ah! I will show you (laughter). In the last Parliament, when I argued this question, I pointed to the statement that was made that there had been a great fall in produce. I said that if that fall in produce was established, the Irish tenants would say they were unable to pay the rents which were the basis of this scheme. If they paid less than the rents upon which the scheme was prepared, there would be a deficiency in the security, and the English taxpayers would have to make it good. At that time, my right hon. friends vouchsafed no answer whatever to that representation. Now it appears they are equally convinced with myself that there is great danger that the fall in produce which undoubtedly has taken place will have its effect upon Irish rents. Well, my right hon. friend the late Prime Minister, in his speech the other night, referred, I think for the first time—I do not remember that he referred to it during the debates in the last Parliament—to an additional security which he said made his scheme absolutely safe, and that it was backed up by the whole of the revenue of Ireland, which was pledged for this purpose. My right hon. friend the late Chief Secretary says the land revenue—(Mr. Morley here interposed with a remark). Yes, that, of course, is the rent. My contention is that it was backed by the land revenue, and by nothing else. My right hon. friend says it was backed by the whole revenue of Ireland. The only portion of the revenue of Ireland over which this House could have had any effectual control under my right hon. friend's scheme was the Customs and Excise. Over them we have an absolute control according to his scheme, and they were pledged in security for Irish rents (an Irish member, "A portion"). Yes; but there was a first mortgage upon them (loud cheers). My right hon. friends around me seem to have forgotten that (cheers and laughter). And what was that first mortgage? It was, in the first place, the whole of the share of Ireland of the National Debt, and, in the second place, the whole of the fixed share of Ireland towards the payment of the army and the navy, and also one million a year

towards the cost of the constabulary; and when all those are paid, and when the first mortgage is paid off, what remains? Only a balance which is perfectly useless for our purposes—perfectly useless as a security. The slightest variation in the collection of the revenue, the slightest variation in the consumption of whisky—(a laugh)—or of the payment of the duty in the locality in which the consumption takes place, would destroy absolutely that security. I agree with the late Chief Secretary that the land revenue was the real security. Yes, but the land revenue was made up by those rents which my right hon. friend the member for Derby now tells us cannot be paid—(Ministerial cheers and laughter)—in the case of five-sixths of the tenants of Ireland. When did my right hon. friend first come to that opinion? (hear, hear.) He and his colleagues are in this dilemma: If they knew it at the time they introduced the Land Bill, why did they not tell us? Why did they not give us some intimation that the security they proposed was open to this deduction? They could not have known it at that time. It is impossible. They could not have withheld their information from the House of Commons if they had known it, and therefore it comes to this, that we have to place what confidence we may on information which has only been obtained since they left office (Ministerial laughter)—which is only at their disposal since they lost all access to official authorities (Ministerial laughter).

British Credit for Friends Only.

But I took another objection to the Land Bill of my right hon. friend. I said I would not be a party to lending any British money at all to what was going to be practically a foreign country (Ministerial cheers). Now that is the point—(renewed Ministerial cheers) to which I want to call the attention of the House. It is one thing that the resources of the Empire should be devoted to adding to the happiness and prosperity of those for whom the Imperial Parliament is directly responsible. It is another thing altogether to lend money to a foreign country (Ministerial cheers). I will take the case of Canada. I ask whether the House would lend

£150,000,000, or £15,000,000, or £1,500,000 in order to buy out Canadian landlords? The thing has only to be stated in order that you may see the absurdity of it. But I do not want hon. members to think that because I am opposed to lending money to a self-governing colony or to Ireland if it is placed in the position of a self-governing colony, therefore I am opposed to lending money to Ireland if it remains an integral portion of the United Kingdom (Ministerial cheers). Why, sir, what was the great controversy to which I devoted myself—I am afraid now it appears with very little advantage—in the course of the autumn. What was that controversy which was described by our opponents as concerning three acres and a cow? (laughter.) Why, it was a large and a just proposal that municipalities throughout the United Kingdom should be empowered to obtain by compulsion land for the purpose of creating allotments and small holdings, with the view of aiding in the creation of a peasant proprietary, and that they should be backed in this work by the credit of the State. What I will do for England and Scotland of course I will do for Ireland so long as she remains an integral portion of the Empire (Ministerial cheers).

A Sound Plan.

Under these circumstances what I have to say in conclusion on this branch of the subject is that I wait for the definite proposals of the Government, but that I am prepared to give a favourable consideration—I would say further, a cordial support—to any proposal they may make—(ironical Parnellite cheers)—for the establishment of a peasant proprietary in Ireland, provided that the whole arrangement is under the complete and effective control of the Imperial Parliament, and provided that it is secured by the intervention of municipal authority (hear, hear). The Government do not propose to confine their inquiry entirely to the question of land purchase. They propose to inquire into judicial rents. They propose to inquire into the subject of public works, and they propose themselves to act as a Commission during the autumn and winter for the purpose of inquiring into the subject of local government. Well, I do not think that some of my right hon.

friends are justified in the ridicule which they have cast upon these proposals (hear, hear). The late Government came into office as a Government of inquiry. It does not lie in our mouth to complain that the present Government are also a Government of inquiry. My right hon. friend the member for Derby referred very wittily to those projects of commission, and reminded us of Canning's anecdote about the red lion. But my right hon. friend has been a great artist in red lions himself (Ministerial cheers and laughter). He has proposed to the House more than one Commission, and I do seriously say——

MR. YEO.—I rise to order, Mr. Speaker (Ministerial cries of "Order"). I beg to ask whether the right hon. gentleman is speaking to the amendment (hear, hear)

THE SPEAKER.—If the right hon. gentleman deviates to the other Commissions proposed to be issued by the Government, I think that would be travelling out of the particular terms of the specific amendment before the House (Parnellite cheers).

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—Mr. Speaker, I was well aware that the position was to some extent an embarrassing one, especially if the House is not willing to extend to me the indulgence which has been asked for and granted to other right hon. gentlemen (oh, oh, and Ministerial cheers). I will endeavour to pass over any point which you may consider—(cries of "Go on")—to be outside the scope of the amendment. I had intended to refer to the commissions, and to see how far the work of these commissions was likely to affect the state of things which is described in the amendment (cheers). If you think in doing that I shall be out of order, of course I shall be bound to obey your ruling (Ministerial cries of "Go on"). I was saying that I do not think it is desirable on either side of the House that we should ridicule the idea of proceeding by inquiry. In all these very important matters Royal Commissions are of the greatest service to the Governments of either party. The only objection that can be fairly taken to a Royal Commission is when it is appointed for the purpose of shelving some question——

MR. W. MACDONALD.—Mr. Speaker, I rise to order (loud cries of "Chair"). I want to know if the right hon. gentleman is

in order in alluding to these Commissions, and to the whole policy of the Government (Nationalist cheers).

THE SPEAKER.—I do not think the right hon. gentleman would be in order in alluding to the whole policy of the Government, and it will be in the recollection of the House that I have already restrained other members from doing so. That liberty which I have refused to other hon. members I cannot extend to the right hon. gentleman.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—In deference to your ruling, I will leave that part of the question relating to the Royal Commissions, and I will turn to the argument of the hon. member for Cork.

MR. PARNELL'S REMEDY FOR DISTRESS.

What is the remedy which he proposes for the state of things which he describes in his amendment? He has told us candidly that in his opinion the only satisfactory and complete remedy is the establishment of an Irish Parliament in Dublin. But the hon. member seems to forget that even if this view was accepted it would not in the slightest degree meet the crisis which he anticipates in November. We have to deal in the amendment with a crisis which is apparently imminent, with the general inability to pay rents, with numerous evictions and consequent suffering, and with great danger to social order. How would that be met by an assertion, supposing such an assertion could be obtained from Parliament, of its intention to establish at some future time an Irish Parliament in Dublin? On that point the hon. member made a very remarkable statement. He said the Irish people would have accepted the Land Bill of the late Government, although they objected to the extravagance of its proposals, and would have paid to the uttermost farthing, so that the British taxpayer would have lost nothing if it had been accompanied by Home Rule (Ministerial cheers). Then what becomes of the inability of the Irish people to pay rents? The hon. member well knows, however, that it is impossible to obtain from this Parliament any assertion of the kind. He expressed himself very well satisfied with the election, and looks forward with confidence to another appeal to the country (hear, hear, and Ministerial laughter). If the hon. member is satis-

fried, so am I. I remember the hon. member and many others in the last Parliament thinking and saying that Mr. Gladstone's policy would sweep the country. I warned them that they were counting without their host, and I told them that the result would be very different from what they anticipated, and that the Unionist majority in this House would be increased. It has been quadrupled. I only wish to warn them once more that, if they appeal again on this subject, they may take my word for it, that the result will be worse to them than the last.

A Practical Suggestion.

The hon. member for Cork made a more practical suggestion than that we should establish a Home Rule Parliament. He made this suggestion, that judicial rents should be revised periodically according to a sliding standard. That is a very taking suggestion. I do not know how far it may be practicable, but I have received many letters from Ireland from persons who are well qualified to speak on such subjects—from land agents (laughter from the Irish members), from landlords, and from tenants, who seem to think that in the suggestion of the hon. member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) there might really be found a solution of the present difficulty with regard to judicial rents. It is very difficult for an English member to judge these Irish questions (ironical cheers from the Nationalists), and I have never attempted to dogmatise about them (oh, oh). I must say that hon. members below the gangway are a little unreasonable. They interrupt when I disagree with the hon. member for Cork. They now interrupt because I agree with him (laughter and cheers). The hon. member said truly that I had intended to visit Ireland, and to see for myself the condition of the country, and to consult local opinion; and he had the good taste to say that I was deterred from that visit because Mr. Healy threatened to duck me in a horsepond (laughter). I do not believe that Mr. Healy ever made use of any such coarse and vulgar phrase (cheers); at all events, I am not aware of it. It is true that I did receive threats from people who told me that I should be murdered if I went to Ireland; but I did not pay any attention to them. I thought

they were merely evidences of ill-restrained enthusiasm—(laughter and cheers)—very much of the same kind as that of the hon. member who addressed the House yesterday, and who admitted that he had spoken of shooting landlords like partridges; but who explained that this was not to be taken seriously, because he objected to shooting even partridges (laughter). I did not carry out my intention of going to Ireland, because the persons who had promised me introductions to leading members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and to representatives of national opinion withdrew their promises. I found that if I went to Ireland I should be boycotted, and should be obliged to consult one side only, and be unable to make the impartial inquiry which I had contemplated. I only refer to this to point out the inconsistency of hon. gentlemen below the gangway. Again and again I have heard them taunt English Ministers and members with taking no pains to acquaint themselves with the condition of Ireland, and with not visiting that country although they visit the Continent; and then when two Ministers propose to devote their holiday—the first opportunity they have—to the consideration of these questions on the spot, hon. members who profess to represent the majority in Ireland do everything in their power to render the visit impossible and useless (Ministerial cheers). There is another point. Hon. gentlemen on this side of the House have referred again and again to a speech in which I uttered very strong language concerning the system known as Dublin Castle, and compared it with the bureaucratic system of Austria and Russia. They have quoted that speech as if it involved an admission on my part that I was in favour of a statutory Parliament. As my visit to Ireland was planned immediately after that speech, the opposition of Irish members to that visit showed, at all events, that at that time they did not accept me as a convert to their views (Ministerial cheers). What are the facts with regard to this question of judicial rents? I want to look at them from both sides. In the first place, there are two very strong arguments in favour of those who contend that the rents should be maintained. There is the fact that the Land Act of 1881 undoubtedly took from the landlords a legal estate, and trans-

ferred it to the tenants. It was held out to the landlords that this would be a final sacrifice on their part, and that the measure would be absolutely adequate to the purpose of giving peace to Ireland. That was the contention of the author of the Act. I confess it is rather a hard doctrine that these same men should be told within two or three years after the passing of the Act that it is altogether insufficient, and the whole question must be re-opened (Ministerial cheers).

Will the Tenants be Free to Pay?

Another point in their favour is that we are not certain, in this matter of rent, that inability to pay is the only factor (renewed cheers). Is there willingness to pay rent? and when there is willingness, we want to know whether there is any interference with that willingness from outside agencies. There is not any one who has even a superficial acquaintance with affairs in Ireland who does not know on good authority cases in which tenants have offered their rents secretly to their landlords because they were honest men, and because they were afraid that the National League should know they were honest and should punish them for it (cheers). In considering this question of rent, we want to know if the tenants are to be free to pay. The hon. member for Cork has shown that he can exercise very great influence, and I believe it is owing to his influence that crime in Ireland has been greatly restricted of late. Does he intend to continue exercising that influence in the same direction, or does he intend to provoke the people? (oh, oh.) I am asking a question. (A voice—"Withdraw.") No, I certainly will not withdraw my question. I shall wait with great interest for the answer. We are told to look to the Chicago Convention. We have been told that there we see a proof of the great moderation of the Irish people. I should be very glad to see signs of moderation in that assembly. I admit its importance, for I know that where the funds are there also is the policy (Ministerial cheers). I have read every word in the reports of that Convention, and I find that one of the delegates of the Irish party specially sent by the hon. member for Cork, Mr. Redmond, made a speech—a carefully

prepared speech, we are told—in which he said, "It will be the duty of the Irish members to make the government of England in Ireland impossible." Do hon. gentlemen from Ireland adopt that? (A pause.) Why don't you answer? (loud Ministerial cheers, and counter cheers.) Do you adopt it?

MR. REDMOND.—I rise for the purpose of asking the right hon. gentleman—(Ministerial cries of "No, no")—whether he will be good enough to give the context of that speech, inasmuch as it is possible to take a single sentence and distort the meaning of the whole speech.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—Mr. Redmond is stated to have made what the report calls a fiery speech. It contains other passages equally strong——

MR. REDMOND.—Read the whole speech (Ministerial cries of "No," laughter, and Home Rule cheers).

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—I thought that the question of the hon. gentleman was *bonâ fide* (Ministerial cheers). I was going to say that the immediate context of the passage I have quoted was that it was impossible for England to govern Ireland. Then following the paragraph I have quoted come the words, "It will be our duty to make it impossible."

MR. REDMOND again interposed, but his words were inaudible.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—Now, sir, it is open to the hon. member to read the whole speech if he likes, and so far as I am concerned I hope he will do so; but in the meantime I again ask Irish members seriously to consider this—Do they adopt the policy of their delegates, or do they repudiate it? If they adopt it, then I say that we shall look with suspicion at the accounts which may come to us in the autumn of the inability of the tenants to pay their rents. If they repudiate it, they must repudiate Mr. Redmond also, and they must repudiate also the money which is subscribed on the basis of these statements (Ministerial cheers).

HOW TO FIX A FAIR RENT.

Well, sir, those are the two points which seem to me to make in favour of the contention that judicial rents should not

be disturbed; but there are very strong reasons on the other side. I do not think that any one will deny that there has been a great fall in the price of almost all the chief produce of Ireland since the judicial rents were fixed. That fall may be variously estimated, but I should put it myself at 20 or 30 per cent. Now, if the judicial rents were fixed upon the basis of former prices, and at that time they were fair, then they must necessarily be unfair now (Home Rule cheers). On the other hand, it is alleged that the Commissioners took into account the possibility of reductions, and I think it is probable that what they did was to fix a fair average rent, having regard to the ordinary fluctuations. But that is not a sufficient answer. Is the present an ordinary fluctuation? Do you believe that the present fall is permanent or temporary? If it is permanent, then clearly the rents are not fair, because the average can never be reached unless you suppose that some day prices will be as much higher than the average as they are now lower. If, on the contrary, you believe that such a fluctuation is temporary and exceptional, then I do not see why you should object to the principle of the sliding scale, which would bring immediate relief to the tenant in his time of need, and would give a prospect of future profit to the landlord. The conclusion I come to is this. I do not believe it would be possible to immediately establish a sliding scale throughout the whole of Ireland. It would be necessary to have an inquiry into the different circumstances of each place before any arrangement of the kind could be agreed to. But I do hope that the Commission which is to be appointed will give this matter careful attention, and I for one should not be at all sorry if the suggestion of the hon. member for Cork were finally adopted. At all events I would say this. I do not admit for a moment that there is any sanctity about judicial or any other rents. If rent cannot be paid and leave a fair subsistence to the tenant, no doubt the landlord must bear the loss. It is imputed to the Government that they have said that under no conceivable circumstances would they disturb judicial rents. Well, all I can say is my own impression is quite different (Ministerial cheers). I have not understood that the Government have

pledged themselves in such a way as to the future. It would be very unreasonable that they should do so. If the Commissioners reported in the sense I have suggested, no Government could possibly undertake the responsibility of maintaining judicial rents which their own Commissioners had reported to be unfair. I understood them to say that in the meantime they would lend no support to any breach of the law. Pending the inquiry of the Commissioners, it was their business to maintain the law. Well, if to say that is a crime, there are a great many criminals on this bench—all those who sit on it, in fact, because they have all again and again expressed the same doctrine. My right hon. friend the member for Derby, Lord Selborne, and the late Prime Minister, again and again, both in reference to Ireland and to the disturbed crofter districts, laid down the doctrine that, pending an alteration in the law which may hereafter be shown to be necessary, it is the duty of the Government to maintain the law as it stands.

The Progress of Conversion.

Then the hon. member for Cork says, and this I think made a great impression on the House, that meanwhile evictions would go on. While the Commissioners were inquiring, the crisis would arise, and we should have difficulties upon us before we knew how to remedy them. Well, he proposes, in order to deal with that state of things, that evictions shall be stayed under certain conditions which he lays down. I was rather surprised to find that he was supported in that contention by my right hon. friend who preceded me, the member for Newcastle-on-Tyne (Mr. J. Morley). My right hon. friend has come to the conclusion after carefully considering this question, that it would be wise to give to the Courts some equitable jurisdiction whether an eviction ought to take place or not. I am very glad that my right hon. friend has come to that conclusion, and that the hon. member for Cork has adopted it. But why did they not give me more encouragement when I proposed it in the month of April? (Ministerial cheers.) In the month of April I proposed a plan of staying evictions. I won't say whether it was right or wrong, but I proposed that they should be stayed,

and I had in my mind the same idea that the right hon. gentleman put forward—that that should be done by giving some kind of equitable jurisdiction to the Courts. I proposed at the same time something else, to which very likely a great objection would apply. In order to facilitate that proposal I suggested that, in the meantime, to such landlords as might require it, a portion of the rent due should be lent as a first charge on the land. That would have involved a loan of a million or two, or by extreme calculation it might have reached four millions, but the security would have been as safe as consols, as I only proposed that a portion equivalent to one quarter of a year's rent should be advanced. This was not, of course, the essential part of the scheme. But how did the late Chief Secretary receive that proposition? He described it as the most extraordinary ever propounded by a man of eminence and character. My right hon. friend said that I proposed first to pass an Act to stay evictions, which would not be passed in a hurry, and that statement was received with loud cheers and laughter by the Home Rule members. That Act, he added, was to remain in force six months, and if things were not quiet at the end of that period another Act would be passed, no doubt—that was not in my proposal, but it was attributed to me—and that the landlords meanwhile were to have their rents lent to them out of our money. I think my proposal was a just one. I wish the Government could have seen their way to treat the question of evictions with some equitable jurisdiction, so as to satisfy the people of England that if they took place, they occurred in the case of men who could pay and would not, and not in the case of the unfortunate who were unable to pay. My right hon. friend put his finger on the blot in my proposal when he said that to pass legislation of that kind would be no slight difficulty in the temper of the House. I recollect what happened at the time of the consideration of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, when under similar circumstances a demand was made by the Irish members to interrupt the course of business in order to introduce a Bill to deal with a temporary difficulty. We consented, and throughout the progress of that Bill we received from the Irish members no assistance. There was continual

obstruction and opposition. At last they moved an amendment against the third reading. There was no gratitude for the Bill introduced by the right hon. member for Midlothian. Although I regret very much that the Government are not able to deal with this matter, I cannot blame them for it. In the face of such a precedent as this, I cannot expect them to undertake complicated legislation of this kind, which would involve the House in protracted debates, and possibly in the end prove to be entirely fruitless (hear, hear). In conclusion, I venture to think that at least this controversy has brought the real issue clearly before the House. You have on the one side those Irishmen and Englismen whose object it is to establish a statutory Parliament in Ireland, or, as some of them prefer, to make Ireland an independent country, and whose policy it is in the meantime to make the administration of affairs in Ireland by England impossible (cheers). If any section of the Liberal party commits itself to such a policy as that, it will suffer seriously in the opinion of the constituencies, and it will wander for many years in the wilderness before it sees the Promised Land (Ministerial cheers). On the other side you have those, to whatever party they belong—in whatever part of the House they may sit—who believe in the supreme necessity of maintaining the effective union between the three Kingdoms (loud Ministerial cheers), and who with that object are prepared to sustain the verdict of the constituencies (cheers). For my part I would say that if the people of this country should weary of the excessive burden of the mighty Empire that has been bequeathed to them by their ancestors—if they should ever be ready to acknowledge their incapacity to fulfil the obligations imposed on them by such an inheritance—then I would rather, instead of halting between two opinions, that they should adopt the logical consequence of their humiliating position—they should yield wholly to their victors—they should let Ireland go, and become what the hon. member for Cork once said he wished her to become, "independent among the nations of the world." But if, on the contrary, the people of this country are not so craven in spirit (loud Ministerial cheers), not willing to repudiate the obligations of a great nation, if they are not

willing to betray those who have trusted to their good faith and honour (Ministerial cheers), I say it is our duty—it is the duty of this Imperial Parliament—to recognise the position, and, while on the one hand maintaining the cause of social order in the great contest between law and sheer lawlessness (cheers), which once was so eloquently described by my right hon. friend the member for Midlothian, to endeavour also in every way to promote the material prosperity and the happiness of the people of Ireland (Irish laughter), and to do for the people of Ireland, as a part of the United Kingdom, all, or more than all, that an Irish Parliament sitting in Dublin could reasonably and justly be expected to do (cheers). It is because I believe the policy of the Government, as it has been shadowed forth, tends in this direction (Irish laughter), and has these objects, that I am prepared to wait until it has been fully developed, and when it has been fully developed I am prepared to give to it a fair and a favourable consideration (loud and prolonged Ministerial cheers).

BIRMINGHAM, December 23rd, 1886.

RE-UNION—A SUGGESTION.

[Mr. Chamberlain, M.P., attended an important meeting of the Western Divisional Council of the Birmingham Liberal Association in the Ellen-street Board Schools. The object of the meeting, which was held at the suggestion of Councillor Payton, the President of the Divisional Council, was that there might be a perfectly frank conference on the part of the members with Mr. Chamberlain, and that those who disagreed with his line of action in reference to the Irish question might have the opportunity of expressing their opinions, and making Mr. Chamberlain acquainted with the grounds upon which they were based. There was a very large attendance. It was understood that the proceedings should be private, so that the conference might be of the freest possible character. A series of questions were put to Mr. Chamberlain touching pretty well all the matters upon which the Gladstonian Liberals disapproved of the line which he had taken. The proceedings, though occasionally animated, were carried on with courtesy and the best of temper, and the various inquiries were very fully answered by Mr. Chamberlain. At the conclusion of his replies he spoke as follows upon the Ministerial crisis and the future of the Liberal party.]

GENTLEMEN, after all, a good deal of what I have said, in reference to my past conduct at all events, is ancient history. I do not mean that it has not its importance. I am very glad that you should have the opportunity of calling me to your bar, and that you should give me the opportunity to reply to any charges which are brought against me; but, after all, the question which is of most interest for all of us at the present moment is not so much what has happened in the past, not the inevitable divergence, which we all regret, as what is to happen in the future (hear, hear). Is there any prospect of harmony

in our objects and action being restored, or is the Liberal party to continue to go into action deprived of one wing, perhaps of more than one wing—to go maimed into action, and to fall a certain prey to its political opponents?

A Great Crisis.

Gentlemen, the situation is extraordinary and critical. It has been wholly transformed within the last twenty-four hours —(hear, hear)—by the startling intelligence that Lord Randolph Churchill, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has resigned his seat in the Government. I have often thought that many Liberals have made a great mistake in their estimate of the character and position of Lord Randolph Churchill (hear, hear). I have differed from him very often, and I have thought him wrong in his methods and in his objects. I have even come almost into personal conflict with him (laughter and cheers). But I have never failed—although it was not always a popular thing to say in a Liberal meeting—I have never failed to do justice to his courage, to his energy, to his resources, to his extraordinary ability (hear, hear), and to his quick appreciation of public sentiment (hear, hear). Lord Randolph Churchill has been brought up in the old Tory traditions, but he has again and again risen superior to them (hear, hear), and has shown that he was able to appreciate the new forces which have been developed in government; and I will say to you that his position in the present Government has been to me a guarantee that they would not pursue a reactionary policy. I have watched Lord Randolph Churchill's public utterances very carefully. He has been speaking to Tory meetings, but he has made many very Liberal statements (hear, hear). I remember what he said in Birmingham on the subject of local government at the time of the last election but one, when he declared that if he were returned to power he would promote a measure of local government which should be as free, as popular, as representative, as the municipal government of which we are so proud, and which has conferred such great advantages upon our communities in the boroughs. I know that he has in one of his speeches expressed a sympathy with the claims for free

education, and with the position of the agricultural labourers. He has declared, with regard to Ireland, in favour of an extension of local government in that country, and of the reform and abolition of Dublin Castle (hear, hear), and the substitution of an elective board in its place. In matters of finance he has always been an advocate of economical administration, and he has shown a desire to redistribute the burdens of taxation as between rich and poor. That is the man who yesterday was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and who now has left the Government, because, as we are told on authority, he is unable to support the extravagant military estimates of his colleagues, and because he does not approve of the shape of the legislative measures which are about to be presented to Parliament, and thinks that they are inadequate to the necessities of the situation (cheers). That is a very significant announcement. I confess it seems to me possible—I fear it is probable—that the old Tory influences have gained the upper hand, and that we may be face to face with a Tory Government whose proposals no consistent Liberal will be able to support (hear, hear). The keynote of Lord Randolph Churchill's recent speeches has been that it was the first duty of the Government to maintain the Unionist alliance. I thought that the Tories had perhaps grown wise by experience, and that they were prepared to govern in a Liberal spirit (a laugh). If they have abandoned that intention, then Lord Salisbury must be prepared for all the consequences (cheers).

A Basis for Reunion.

Now, gentlemen, I ask myself, in view of this startling change in the situation, what are the Gladstonian Liberals going to do? It seems to me that they have a great and perhaps a final opportunity. Remember, as has been truly said here to-night, that we Liberals are agreed upon ninety-nine points of our programme (hear, hear); we only disagree upon one. We are all agreed, absolutely agreed, in favour of what was called the authorized programme, the programme put forward with all solemnity as that upon which Mr. Gladstone desired to do battle at the time of the election twelve months ago. There has been no change. I am as ready now, loyally, to support

that programme as I was then (hear, hear). There has been a change, and a very favourable change, in respect to what was called the unauthorized programme (laughter, and hear, hear). It appears now that almost all Liberals are in favour of that also, although I must say that, at the time when I was working night and day in order to lay the details of that programme before the Radicals of the country, I had very little support indeed from the majority of those who are now perambulating Great Britain with noisy exclamations trying to rule me out of the party because, forsooth, I am not a Radical, while they alone are worthy of the name (laughter).

We are now agreed, I say, upon, I believe, every important point of Liberal policy as affecting England, Scotland, and Wales. Do you not think that those three countries have some claim upon us? Do you not think that they have a right to put pressure upon their leaders to do these things upon which we are agreed, and which would do so much for the prosperity and happiness of those three portions of the kingdom? But I go further than that. I say even upon Irish matters, when I look into the thing, I am more surprised at the number of points upon which we are agreed than at the remainder, upon which for the present we must be content to differ. We are agreed, in the first place, in our repudiation of the state of lawlessness which has been brought about in Ireland by misguided men. It is not I alone and the Liberal Unionists alone who denounce it. We have the assurance of Lord Ripon and others who know Mr. Gladstone's mind, that he himself is as much opposed as he has always been, to anything in the nature of unconstitutional agitation (hear, hear). But our agreement does not merely take a negative form. We are agreed as to the importance of the land question, which still in Ireland is the cause of almost all our difficulties. I am not prepared to admit, as I have already said, that the grievances of the Irish tenants are greater in kind or degree than the grievances of English, Scotch, or Welsh tenants, but I admit they have grievances, and I know that they are discontented; and I am convinced that they will remain so, and that there will be a ground ready prepared for the agitator and for all who detest

England and the English connection so long as the land question remains on its present footing. In that I entirely agree with the Gladstonian Liberals. I see that Lord Spencer and Mr. Morley the other day repeated what they had said again and again during the election—that the land question must be settled, or that the Irish difficulty would remain. You have no doubt observed—it is a very striking observation to make—you have observed that when the Home Rule Bill was defeated, and the Irish members went back to Ireland to rouse their people to indignation, they said not one word, or hardly one word, about Home Rule, but they went at once to the agrarian question as the point upon which they were certain to enlist the sympathies of the people. There is the real grievance of Ireland, there is the real problem we have to solve; and, believe me, gentlemen, that without solving this land question Home Rule is impossible; and that if you solve it, Home Rule will be unnecessary (applause).

A Round Table Conference.

Are we far apart upon the principles which ought to guide a settlement of the land question? I think not. I think we are all agreed that it is absolutely necessary if we are to have peace that the Irish tenant should be transformed into an Irish owner—that dual ownership has become impossible. As long as there are two properties in the land the tenant will always fall an easy prey to the agitator who endeavours to teach him how he may increase his share of the property at the expense of the property of somebody else. We must have one property in the land, and that the property of the tenant, and I do not believe it is beyond the reach of English statesmanship to devise a scheme by which that change can be effected without unnecessary risk to the British taxpayer. My opposition to Mr. Gladstone's Bill upon this point, as indeed upon everything else, has been grossly misrepresented, although my words remain in print to testify to what I have really said. I have never said that I was opposed to a great land scheme. What I have said was, that I was opposed to Mr. Gladstone's Bill chiefly on two grounds—first, that I believed it involved

almost a certainty of loss, which the British taxpayer ought not to be called upon to bear; and, secondly, that I was not prepared to do anything as a preliminary to an arrangement which would make Ireland a practically independent country. It is one thing to call in all the resources of the State to benefit those who are your own fellow-citizens, who share with you in all the responsibilities of government, and who are a part of your nation; it is a different thing altogether to undertake risk for those who are about to cut adrift from you, who are about to occupy an independent, if not a hostile position. I believed it was possible to devise a plan—I have never doubted it—I am convinced now that, sitting round a table and coming together in a spirit of compromise and conciliation—almost any three men, leaders of the Liberal party, although they may hold opposite views upon another branch of the question, would yet be able to arrange some scheme which would fulfil the conditions which I have laid down, which would not involve unnecessary or unfair risk to the British taxpayer, and yet would make in a short time the Irish tenant the owner of the land which he cultivates.

Well, gentlemen, we could go even farther in the direction of unity than I have already gone. Even upon this question of local government the difference recedes if you come to think of it. We are all agreed, I imagine, as to the nature of a scheme which would be applicable to England and Scotland. We are all agreed to apply it in principle at all events, with such alteration of detail as may be necessary, to the sister country of Ireland. We are prepared, none more so than I, to decentralize the system of administration which is known as Dublin Castle, which I believe has given rise to great abuse, and has naturally and justly caused the greatest irritation. We are prepared to give any extension you can ask of what is purely municipal government, and it is not until we have done all this that we reach the debatable ground upon which at present, at all events, agreement is impossible. Now, gentlemen, I ask you, as sensible men, are we—are the Liberal party—to remain disjointed for so long with one another, fighting an internecine strife for the benefit of our opponents, when there is so much

good work to be done upon which we are all agreed, and to which we are all anxious to lay our hands? (cheers.) Is it not possible, I say—and I am induced to make this appeal by the circumstances to which I have referred in an earlier part of my speech—is it not possible now once more that we may make an honest attempt, if not to agree upon every point, at least to agree upon this—that we will proceed to carry out all these vast changes, all these important reforms upon which there is no difference; and that we will leave it to time and to experience, and to free and frank discussion, to say whether, when we have accomplished all these, we shall not go one step farther in the direction of the views of those who now, unfortunately, are our opponents? (loud cheers.) Well, gentlemen, whatever may be the issue of the appeal which I make, or of the present situation, I hope that here at least we may preserve our old friendships. I hope that here at least we may speak of one another and think of one another with mutual respect. If we cannot agree, at least I hope that there will be no unworthy imputation of motive. I have always found in my experience that the people who impute bad motives are those who discover them in their own minds; and I am glad to think that here at least no such bitterness has been imported into the controversy. We have been content as men who have worked together, and who have fought side by side in many victories to discuss the points of difference which have arisen; and if we do not altogether arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, I hope we may yet go on in harmony and mutual self-respect, and that we may be determined not to allow our differences to sever the connection which has been, I think, so satisfactory to all of us. To me, my position in Birmingham, and in this division, has been—as I have often said—a peculiar and an exceptional one. My life is bound up in Birmingham, all its institutions, its prosperity, its politics, have been my care and principal thought for the whole course of my public life. I know its people. Your faces, if not your names, are familiar to me. As I walk through the streets I seem to gather instinctively the minds of the people. And I say that to me there is no position to which I can attain—there is no triumph

which can come to me—there is no success which I can possibly hope for, that would in any degree compensate me for the loss of the respect, ay, and of the affection, that has hitherto been shown me (loud and continued cheers).

HAWICK, January 22nd, 1886.

DURING THE CONFERENCE.

[Sir George Trevelyan had held the seat for the Border Burghs during 17 years; but the division of opinion which proved so disastrous to the Liberal party elsewhere was destined also to end this long and honourable connection. The conflict was almost entirely confined to the Liberal ranks, the Conservatives, all told, mustering only 553 at the last contested election, and it ended in the return of a local Gladstonian Liberal by a majority of only 30.

Sir George Trevelyan's friends and supporters having decided to present him with his portrait as a mark of personal regard as well as of appreciation of his services to the Liberal cause, a demonstration was arranged in January, 1887, when the presentation was made. Mr. Chamberlain was invited to attend this meeting.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN said:—Mr. Provost, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I thank your very heartily on behalf of all those to whom the resolution refers for this assurance of your continued confidence and support (cheers). The past twelve months have been a time of great trial and anxiety. The speakers to the resolution have eloquently described the sacrifices which some of us have had to make. We had to suffer the pain of separation from old friends and colleagues, and that in itself is no slight matter. We have endured the disappointment of all our hopes of progress, and we have had to dismiss to the dim and distant future projects the accomplishment of which seemed a short time ago to be within our grasp. We have seen the great party whose union in the past we have struggled to maintain, and whose organization we have done something to perfect (cheers); we have seen that great party shattered and powerless for the purposes to which our past life has been

devoted (cheers). And, added to all this, we have had to endure misrepresentations and abuse and insult, all the harder to bear because they come not from our political opponents, but from those whose views we have hitherto represented and whose interests we have faithfully endeavoured to serve (loud cheers). I say for myself, and I have no doubt I might say it for others, that although this treatment has left behind it bitter memories which it will not be easy to efface, yet I have never doubted that the time would come when at least the vast majority of our countrymen would recognise the integrity of our motives, and when even the noisy revilers who have obtained a temporary notoriety by abusing us (loud cheers), would slink back ashamed of the intolerance and the bigotry which are alien to all our ideas of true Liberalism (cheers).

A Tribute.

I am here to-night chiefly in order to join you in the public tribute which you are paying to the character and the services of your late representative (cheers). Of all the events of the last General Election, none was more discouraging, none more unfortunate, than the defeat of Sir George Trevelyan in the Border Burghs (shame). It was not only that the House of Commons lost one of its most eminent members; it was not only that the country was deprived of the services of a statesman who, to use his own memorable words, could never forget that he was an English gentleman (cheers), and who trod the miry ways of politics without a stain upon his conspicuous integrity and honour; but there was something even worse than that. It was this occurrence that suggested the fear lest the British democracy should fail in generosity and magnanimity, and should be unmindful of past services (cheers). You know that it was said of the great Athenian democracy which established such claims upon the admiration and the reverence of succeeding ages that it displayed fickleness and ingratitude, that it allowed its ablest citizens to languish in exile, that it suffered a momentary difference of opinion to obliterate the recollection of long and strenuous services. I have always maintained that no such littleness was to be anti-

cipated in the case of the electorate of Great Britain. I have pointed with pride to the fidelity of Birmingham to Mr. Bright, of Wolverhampton to Mr. Villiers, of Bradford to Mr. Forster, and of Hackney to Mr. Fawcett (cheers); I have pointed to these things as proofs that our great Liberal constituencies were generous in their recognition of past services, and that they would not lightly sever their connection with those who had devoted their lives to their interests. Had Sir George Trevelyan no claim upon the Border Burghs? (cries of "Yes.") For seventeen years he was your representative, and, so far as I know, during the whole of that time there never arose a difference between you and him—(never)—until you broke the bond which bound him to you. Fifteen years before that he had resigned his office, he had sacrificed his hopes of promotion, rather than be a party to a sectarian and limited system of national education. Twelve years before that he had initiated and carried to a successful result a crusade against privilege in the army. A few years afterwards he was the first in the field, he led the fight which ended in the extension of the franchise, and in the admission of two millions of capable citizens to equal electoral rights (loud cheers). In 1882 he accepted, at a time of great personal danger, the thankless office of Chief Secretary for Ireland. In 1885 he gave his eloquence and ability in order to secure the triumph of the Liberal cause, and in order to replace Mr. Gladstone in his position as head of the Government. For which of these things, men of the Border Burghs, did ye stone him (loud cheers), and who is there among those who voted against him, or who chuckled over his defeat who can show us a nobler or a similar record? (cheers.) But, gentlemen, in the time of a General Election, I suppose, we may all do things in haste for which we have to repent at leisure. I cannot doubt that these former friends and supporters of Sir George Trevelyan, looking back now on the past, must deplore the severance of a connection honourable alike to the member and the constituency (hear, hear, and cheers), a connection which every one must acknowledge, while it lasted, dignified and illustrated the political annals of the Border Burghs (cheers).

A Brighter Outlook.

I leave now any further reflections upon the past, and I turn with much greater satisfaction to the prospect of the future. The new year has brought with it many extraordinary changes, and not the least welcome of these is the evidence which it has afforded of a widespread desire to end the divisions in the Liberal party, and to restore once more the strength and union of what Mr. Gladstone has truly described as a great instrument of progress. You know that Sir George Trevelyan and myself have recently been endeavouring to promote this object, and although I admit that the difficulties which are yet to be surmounted are very serious, yet I am encouraged to say to you now that the hopes with which I entered the conference have been confirmed and strengthened by what has taken place (cheers). One thing which justifies me in making that statement is the conviction at which I have arrived that every man present at the conference, and those who are directly or indirectly represented at it, are sincerely desirous of carrying agreement to the utmost possible limits consistent with the maintenance of the principles which we may respectively consider fundamental (cheers). You know that for very obvious reasons we have thought it necessary to keep our deliberations secret until we shall arrive at something like a final conclusion, and I hope, therefore, you will receive with the gravest suspicion the surmises and the allegations by which the imagination of the reporter seeks to do duty for the utter inaccuracy of his information (laughter and cheers). You will understand there are many persons who, for motives which it would not be difficult to fathom, do not desire that this conference should succeed. There are some who say that no compromise can be allowed, no settlement can take place, unless Mr. Gladstone retires from the leadership of the Liberal party and confesses the errors he has committed (laughter). There are others who declare that no arrangement of any kind should be listened to unless Sir G. Trevelyan and myself are sufficiently contrite and humble; and unless we recant our heresy we are not to be received into the arms of these gentlemen, who are generally very obscure politicians (laughter). Gentlemen, I shall not

break any confidence at all when I tell you that no such pretension as this by either side has entered or will enter into the proceedings of our friendly discussion (hear, hear). If the union of the Liberal party can only be accomplished by the humiliation of one or other of its sections, if it can only be purchased by the betrayal of principles boldly asserted hitherto and persistently maintained, then I say better a manly strife and an honest difference of opinion than a patched-up peace bought by dishonourable concessions. And it is because I believe that at all events a great approximation to peace, if not a complete agreement, may be attained without betrayal of the trust which has been reposed in us, that I ask you to await with hope and confidence the result of our further deliberations (cheers).

TOO LONG THE SPORT OF PARTIES.

I am well aware that even if we are as successful as we hope in bringing about a common agreement among ourselves, our task is only half accomplished unless we have the sanction and approval of others who are more influential than we are. But that is a prospect which does not discourage me. I am not hopeless of an appeal to the patriotism of our statesmen. Do you not think this question of Ireland has been long enough the sport of parties? (hear, hear.) Has not Ireland been long enough a playground for British politicians and for Irish agitators? May it not be possible even now at this last moment to arrange a national settlement of what is after all a national difficulty? (cheers.) This great Irish problem has baffled our statesmanship and distracted our politics for centuries. Our failure to grapple with it has lowered us in the eyes of other nations, and it has weakened our influence in the councils of Europe. The injury which we have done to Ireland by our misgovernment has been more than equalled by the injury which her discontent has done to us (hear, hear). It is said that we have destroyed her Parliament—which, I think, was a very dubious blessing to her (laughter)—but, in any case, she has avenged the destruction by paralysing the efficiency and lowering the character of our Parliament, which is a very different matter. In presence of a national danger and a

national scandal I may surely call upon statesmen of all parties to join in endeavouring to find a safe and an honourable solution (cheers). I think it will be quite possible for me as I proceed to show to you that in spite of our differences—and they are great and many—the broad lines of any possible settlement of the Irish question are not a monopoly of any individual or of any section, but that they are the common ground of patriotic and intelligent men of all parties and of all sections (hear, hear).

The Land Question the Most Urgent.

The Irish question resolves itself into two great branches. There is, in the first place, the agrarian question, the question of the land; and there is, in the second place, the Home Rule question, the question of local government. In my opinion—an opinion which I have expressed before, and which I have not changed—the first of these two branches is by far the most important and most urgent (hear, hear). It is quite true that I am told that even if the land question were settled, even if every Irish tenant were to cultivate his own land with a fair chance of comfort and prosperity, he would still be unhappy, he would still be discontented, unless he had a Parliament in Dublin. I am told that by the gentlemen who not unnaturally think that they would be called upon by a grateful country to compose that Parliament (laughter). I think they are quite right to magnify their offices (laughter). I very seriously doubt, however, whether their fellow-countrymen will attach as much value as they do themselves to their services in this legislative capacity. But after all it is a matter which I need not argue, because I take it that we shall be agreed that the removal of a certain portion of Irish domestic business—and I will say of Scotch business and of Welsh business also—from Westminster, would be a great relief to the Parliamentary machine (hear, hear); and if it could be accomplished with safety, I do not suppose there is any man who would make the slightest objection to it (hear, hear). One thing is certain. No such devolution is possible, without the basest betrayal of the interests of the minority, until we have settled this question of the land, until we can be certain that this continual strife,

this social warfare, this agrarian contest which has been waged so long, will cease and determine. That is a fact which has made itself apparent to statesmen of all parties. It has been acknowledged by Lord Beaconsfield as much as by Mr. Gladstone, by Lord Hartington as freely as by myself, by Mr. Smith, by Lord George Hamilton, by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, as well as by Lord Spencer and Mr. John Morley (hear, hear). There s no difference of opinion as to the desirability of the object. If there is a difference at all, it is only as to the method of accomplishing it. Both parties have tried their hands at legislation, and both parties have failed. Mr. Gladstone's two great Bills, the Land Acts of 1870 and 1881, will always remain as monuments of his genius and his constructive skill (cheers). But even their author admits that he has to seek for a final settlement of the question in different directions. Now if they had come earlier, I think they might have been successful; but they fell upon unpropitious times, and they have not succeeded in solving the problem. The object of these two Bills was to perpetuate the system of dual tenure, to give it permanency and security, to mark the respective interests of the landlord on the one hand and the tenant on the other. By making him contented and safe in his holding, it was expected he would become both able and willing to fulfil his obligations. I am afraid that that expectation has not been up to the present time fulfilled. The result, however, it is worth while to remember, has been to place the Irish tenant already in a position which is more favourable than that of any agricultural tenant throughout the whole of Europe (hear, hear)—I will say in any civilized country on the face of the globe. Remember what his advantages are. In the first place, the Irish tenant has absolute security in his holding, and cannot be disturbed so long as he fulfils the statutory conditions, the conditions imposed, not by his landlord, but by Parliament. He has the fullest property in all his improvements, and so much does that amount to that actually in recent years, even in these bad times, the interest of the tenant, the right to the lease which he gives up, has been sold again and again for more than the whole value of the freehold of the land (hear, hear). He has the right to make this

sale in the open market; he has the right to go to a judicial and disinterested tribunal to fix the rent, entirely without regard to the value which competition would give to the land. But that is not all. Under the subsequent Act which Lord Ashbourne passed in the last session of Parliament, the tenant in Ireland, if he can agree with his landlord, if he desires to become the owner of his land, can do so at the end of 49 years by paying —how much do you imagine? How much more than his rent? What addition do you imagine that he has to pay in order to become the owner of his land? By paying 25 per cent. less than the fair rent which has been fixed for him by an impartial tribunal (cheers). Really when we hear of the frightful injustice committed by England upon Ireland, when we hear of the miseries which are endured by the Irish tenants in consequence of our feudal tenure, at least let us have the common fairness to admit that there are thousands and tens of thousands of tenants throughout Scotland and England who would receive as an inestimable boon the opportunities which the Irish tenant so scornfully rejects (cheers).

Three Causes of Previous Failure.

What is the reason of the failure of this legislation, designed and carried into effect by the ablest Parliamentarian that this country has ever known, and legislation that every one must admit was beneficial and generous in intention? I think you will find that there are three causes which may be given as particular causes for the failure of this legislation. The first applies to the whole country—applies to every class of agricultural tenant; the second and third apply only to particular classes. First and foremost there is the fact that it is agitation which has reduced the rent of the Irish tenant, and that so long as agitation gives him an opportunity and the hope of reducing his rent still further, so long agitation will go on (cheers). No settlement we have hitherto made has been a final one. It has been possible for the Irish tenant, if he can secure a reduction of his rent, by legal means or by illegal means, in the end to become the owner at a much less price, and so long as that is the case, no offer, however beneficent,

will tempt him to come to a settlement. Here is the real strength of the Parnellite position. This is what they rely upon in their appeal to the peasants in Ireland. It is of no use offering to them 10 per cent. or 50 per cent. reduction as long as they are taught that if they hold out they will get the land for nothing (cheers). This is the basis of the Plan of Campaign, which is the most immoral and dishonest—(loud cheers)—conspiracy which has ever been devised in a civilized country. But the strength of the men who support this plan and of the agitation in Ireland at the present time consists in this—they are able to tell the Irish tenant that if he will go on agitating, the English Parliament will yield to him, and he will get his land, if not for nothing, at all events for much less than he would be fairly called upon to pay (cheers). I hope in any further legislation we shall at least secure its finality (hear, hear), we shall at least take measures to prove to the Irish tenant that nothing more is to be done, that the respective rights of himself and his friends have been finally ascertained, and in that case I think we should hear very little of the Plan of Campaign, and I am not certain that we should hear a great deal of Home Rule (laughter).

The second of the three causes to which I refer, and which applies only to particular cases, is the fact that the Land Act of 1881 did not extend its effects to the whole of the cultivating tenants of Ireland. It excluded the leaseholders, and the leaseholders, numbering probably something like 100,000 out of the tenants of Ireland, are for the most part among the most substantial, the most industrious, and the most loyal of the Irish population, and accordingly their discontent, their just discontent, is a very serious element in the situation. For my part, I never have been able to understand, I never have been able to approve, the exclusion of leaseholders from the chief benefits of the Land Act. The chief principle of the Act was that it was necessary to protect the tenants from year to year from extortionate rents exacted from them under the pressure of unrestricted competition. But if that be so, the leaseholders also must be held to have been under precisely the same pressure, even if it had differed in degree, and they also

were entitled to protection; and I trust in any future legislation that this omission—and I am sure almost everybody who has been connected in a responsible position with the Government of Ireland will agree with me in my hopes—will be corrected.

EVICTIONS.

The third cause applies to a still larger number of persons. It is to be found in the chronic misery, the deplorable condition, of the smallest class of the tenants in Ireland. No doubt you have been moved, as everybody with a spark of humanity must have been moved, by the accounts that have been current lately of certain evictions in Ireland, and especially evictions on the estate of Glenbeigh. I feel myself, I have always felt, a profound sympathy for those poor people, and for all in a similar situation; and my sympathy has not been disturbed in the slightest degree by the insults which have been hurled at me by some of their self-constituted leaders (cheers). I have no sympathy at all with the well-paid patriots—(renewed cheering)—who, one and all, from the highest to the lowest, have made a good thing out of this agitation, and who divide in secret among themselves the bulk of the American subscriptions (cheers), while they vote in public infinitesimal sums in aid of the starving peasants whom their evil counsels have reduced to ruin (cheers). But for these peasants themselves, whatever errors they have committed, I say our pity, and more than that, redress and immediate remedy, are needed. We are told that in this case no landlord is to blame, that the proceedings are taken by a money-lender in London. But I say that any law which permits any man to turn out the aged and the sick shelterless and foodless on the bleak hillside in this inclement weather is a bad law, and ought to be altered (cheers). Do not think I say this because I am a Radical imbued with prejudices against landlords. I should like to read to you a passage from a writer whose moderation cannot be suspected. The writer says:—

"It is enough to know that on a general balance of established facts there are beyond all question cases—and such cases

bring shame and discredit not only on those concerned in them, but on the whole body of the landlords—in which the owners of property have not behaved with any show of respect for the common principles of equity, and have done gross wrong to those whose happiness, whose lives even, depended upon their forbearance. Such landlords have no right to be supplied by the Government with the means of carrying out the decrees granted to them by process of law. Some of the evictions which have already taken place this winter—we do not care to specify them—have been inhuman spectacles, fit only for a barbarous country and barbarous age. They revolt the consciences of men, influenced by feelings of sympathy for the suffering poor."

That is a passage which in my opinion does credit to the writer, and it did not appear in a Radical or even in a Liberal journal. It is copied from the *Standard* newspaper, the leading Conservative organ. But whatever remedy may hereafter be found for these particular abuses, I have referred to the case as an illustration of the general position. With these poor people it is not a question of rent, it is not a question of reduction of rent, or any rent at all.

Mr. Parnell's Relief Bill.

We are told that these evictions are the consequence of our rejection of our Mr. Parnell's Bill in the last session of Parliament. That is a monstrous and deliberate inaccuracy (cheers). Mr. Parnell's Bill would have done nothing for them (hear, hear). These people could not pay 50 per cent. of their rent, leave alone the arrears. They could not pay the fraction which was being asked of them. They had not paid rent, some for three years, some for five years, some for six, ay and some for seven years, and yet they are starving. The land which they cultivate is not sufficient, even if they pay no rent at all, to give them a bare subsistence; and they do not stand alone, because there are many others in the same position. I find from returns that there are 60,000 holdings in Ireland all under five acres, and 150,000 holdings between five and fifteen acres, and nearly three-fourths of the holdings in Ireland are under thirty acres. What follows? These people are not farmers; the majority

of them are more in the nature of labourers with allotments. They are people who have to depend for their subsistence upon their labour, and who eke out their existence with what they can get from their allotments. That is a desirable position in good times, when there is plenty of employment. When Irish labourers came to England and found good wages, and when they were able to gather the kelp at a large profit, these allotments put them in a position in which many an English labourer would have been glad to find himself. But now they are labourers without labour, and they have to live upon their allotments, and the allotments are not sufficient for that purpose. Their position will come home to you as Scotchmen when I say that the difficulty is the same as that of the crofters and cottars in the Highlands. The great difficulty is not so much the getting of lower rent as it is the getting of more land. Well, gentlemen, this has to be borne in mind, and I hope that in any further consideration of the subject it will not be, as it has been hitherto, left entirely out of sight.

Cultivating Ownership and Enlargement of Holdings.

Where is the remedy to be found for the state of things which I have explained? I suppose everybody has been brought by recent events, if not by past experience, to the conviction that the matter must be dealt with broadly and comprehensively, that nothing short of a great measure will settle this question. Such a measure has settled similar questions, as when the serfs were enfranchised in Russia, or when the peasants of Germany were made owners. Only by dealing with the question in this way is there any chance of securing anything like finality, and any measure that is proposed must seek in the first place to do away with all this complication of dual tenure, to get rid of landlords, and substitute cultivating owners in every case. And, in the second place, it must make adequate and effective provision for enlarging the smaller holdings, for re-settling the land among the occupiers of the land, so that at least all those who remain upon it shall have land enough to give them the chance of a comfortable and happy existence (cheers).

I will not dwell on Mr. Gladstone's last attempt to deal with this matter. It was a great attempt, a very bold and a very generous attempt, but I think it was conclusively repudiated by the country. It was repudiated because the electors thought, and in my judgment rightly, that it involved too great a risk, and was likely to impose too heavy a burden upon the British taxpayers for the benefit of Irish landlords (hear, hear). It is quite true that Mr. Gladstone said that the risk would be infinitesimal, and any statement coming from him with his great financial experience is entitled to the most serious consideration. But the inference I draw from that statement is this—and I should make it a cardinal principle in any future legislation—that if this security is good enough for the British Exchequer, and for English and Scotch taxpayers, it is good enough for the Irish landlords (hear, hear). And in any future scheme I believe it will be found impossible to put the risk anywhere but upon the right shoulders—in fact, to keep the risk where it is at present.

Lord Ashbourne's Act.

Well, then there remains to consider Lord Ashbourne's Act. That Act has been taken advantage of to a considerable extent, and no doubt it would have been much more largely adopted if it had not been for the opposition of the National League. Lord Ashbourne's Act is voluntary in its operation, and it is confined in amount to a sum of five millions. If it were made compulsory—and I will say that, in my judgment, any scheme which is to deal with this great subject adequately must be a compulsory scheme, for you have no right whatever to interfere in these private relations except for some national emergency; and if it is really national and great—then you have a right to interfere compulsorily. But if Lord Ashbourne's Act were made compulsory, or if the option were largely availed of, then you would have an amount of money required which would at least be equal to that required in Mr. Gladstone's Bill, and the risk would be still greater (cheers). Under Lord Ashbourne's Act the State—that is, the British Exchequer—would become landlord of the whole of Ireland. It would be in direct relations

with the tenants, who will have every inducement and every opportunity of repudiating their obligations. I think the moment that is understood any considerable extension of that Act becomes impossible. I have always regarded it as a merely temporary expedient, and I hope that no Government, neither this Government nor any other, will think of giving to it any great development. The problem is confined, as I have said, to some means of accomplishing an object which everybody declares to be desirable, and at the same time not to impose new or undue risks upon the British taxpayer (cheers). I believe—in fact, I am confident—such a scheme can be found and will be found (cheers). If that is so, I ask if there is anything to prevent all parties who concur in the necessity of this proposal, and who do not differ in the slightest about the principles; is there anything to prevent all parties combining to give it a successful realization? (hear, hear.)

Home Rule Without Separation.

I hope I have not wearied you—(no, no, "Go on," and cheers)—by this examination of what is undoubtedly a very complicated subject; but, if you will bear with me, before I sit down, I want to address myself to that part of the Irish question which, we are told, presents the greatest obstacles, and will be found an insurmountable difficulty by the conference in which Sir George Trevelyan and I are now engaged (cheers). I think that the time is favourable to such an examination. The smoke of the great conflict in which we were recently engaged has cleared away, and the position of the several combatants can be accurately defined. In the midst of the fight, in the heat of the struggle, it was impossible to secure impartial attention to the issues involved. Now there is no excuse for not examining seriously and calmly—as the importance of the question deserves—the real issues which divided us then and the issue which may still continue to divide us now. There are four parties to any such consideration. In the first place, there is Mr. Gladstone and his followers; in the second place, there is the Conservative party; in the third place, there are the Liberal Unionists (cheers); and, lastly, there are the Irish

people. Now let us try if we can see what are the principles, the fundamental principles, which have underlaid the action of these four parties, and then we shall know whether agreement is or is not attainable; and if we cannot get agreement, at all events we shall limit and establish the issues on which the contest is hereafter to be conducted (cheers). With regard to Mr. Gladstone, his position is perfectly clear. He has defined it more than once, and he has said that his object is to establish some kind of legislative authority in Ireland for the transaction of domestic business, applicable in principle to other parts of the kingdom, and with ample guarantees for the unity of the Empire, the supremacy of Parliament, and for the rights of minorities. That is Mr. Gladstone's main principle. Now I ask you if that came to us as an abstract resolution, if it were not complicated by the interpretation which was given to it in the Home Rule Bill, is there anything in the principle to which any reasonable man can object? (no.) In the House of Commons again and again I offered, if the Bill were withdrawn, to vote for such a resolution. I stated that my friends and myself objected, not to the principle as Mr. Gladstone stated it, but to the plan by which he proposed to give effect to it (cheers). But now the Bill having been defeated, the Bill being dead, the ground is clear. As I understand, Mr. Gladstone's main principle is as I have described it; but he is open-minded as to the plan by which it may be sought to give effect to it, and is even anxious to accept any plan consistently with his principle which will unite the Liberal party. Therefore, so far as he is concerned, we have his authority to seek and so see if such a plan can be found. Now, about the Conservatives. It is more difficult a great deal, especially for me, to describe their position. The difficulty arises in part from the fact that they have, as an Opposition, wisely confined themselves hitherto to a negative policy. They have made clear their objections to Mr. Gladstone's Bill, but they have not told us what they would be willing to put in its place. But although they have not hitherto indicated any affirmative policy, I do not think there is any reason to believe that they are committed to a policy of blank resistance. Any one who has read, and read carefully, the speeches of Lord

Salisbury, of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, of Lord Carnarvon, and, above all, of Lord Randolph Churchill, all of them Conservative leaders, will see that they are not averse to large and drastic changes in the government of Ireland. They are prepared for a reform in the system of local government. They are prepared for a good deal more. They are prepared to consider and review the whole of the irritating centralizing system of administration which is known as Dublin Castle. But if they come to work this out, they will be compelled, if they have not already done so, to accept the principle—the main principle—of Mr. Gladstone's Bill. They will have to substitute for the administration of Dublin Castle some kind of legislative authority, subject to the guarantees which Mr. Gladstone has laid down; and this will be the case, although they have rejected Mr. Gladstone's plan as dangerous, and his guarantees as totally inadequate. Well, then, I say, under these circumstances there is no reason to suppose—if an alternative plan could be found which, though consistent with Mr. Gladstone's principles, would satisfy the objections which the Conservatives have hitherto taken to his plan—I say there is no reason to suppose they would be hostile to it (hear, hear).

I pass on to the position of the Liberal Unionists. Let me say at the outset that in my opinion any plan of settlement, any proposal to reunite the Liberal party which had not the approval of Lord Hartington, would be shorn of half its value (cheers). There are some of the baser sort of politicians who are clamouring that Lord Hartington should be ostracised, and that he should be driven from the Liberal party. Such an attempt is founded on the grossest ingratitude (cheers), because Lord Hartington led the party in its time of greatest depression with skill, with ability, and with perfect loyalty (cheers). When the party returned to power, he quietly effaced himself to make room for Mr. Gladstone (hear, hear), and he gave to Mr. Gladstone, as head of the Government which was then formed, the most valuable and the most loyal support during the period of six years that it lasted (cheers). I have often differed from Lord Hartington upon the details of Liberal policy, and I think it is very probable if we both live that I shall differ from him

again (laughter). But I have never been mean enough or foolish enough to desire that he should be excluded from the Liberal councils to which in the past he has brought all the weight of a great name, all the authority of a powerful intellect, all the advantage that is given by absolute integrity and generous patriotism (cheers). I say, then, that with me it is a point of great importance that Lord Hartington should sanction any proposal for a settlement. Now, what has Lord Hartington said on the subject? In his address, a formal and carefully prepared document to the electors of Rossendale at the last election, Lord Hartington, in giving his reasons for opposing the Bills of Mr. Gladstone, went on to discuss alternative plans. He referred in the first instance to the necessity for a separate treatment of Ulster. As to that I will say nothing, because Mr. Gladstone himself has always allowed that that was an open question, and he has invited suggestions and discussion upon it. But then Lord Hartington went on to lay down four conditions which, in his opinion, were essential to the establishment of any legislative authority in Ireland. The first of those conditions was that the Imperial Parliament should continue to represent the whole, and not only a part, of the United Kingdom (hear, hear). The second was that the powers given to any new local authority should be delegated and not surrendered (hear, hear). The third was that the subjects to be treated by the local authority should be clearly defined, and should be subject to revision and control. And the last point was that the administration of justice should remain with an authority responsible to the Imperial Parliament (hear, hear). I hope you have already observed that there is nothing in any one of those four conditions which is inconsistent with the main principle which alone Mr. Gladstone considers fundamental. The conditions also are fundamental with Lord Hartington, but with Mr. Gladstone they are not fundamental, and if they are included in some plan which carries out Mr. Gladstone's main principle, there is apparently no reason why both should not concur in such a scheme.

The Canadian Precedent.

Is it possible to find such a plan? Well, this is not the time

to enter into details. It would not be proper for me to anticipate in any way what the deliberations of the conference may hereafter bring forth, but at least I may be permitted to refer to what I have already said in public. I may refer to a speech which I made in the House of Commons on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill, when I pointed to the case of our own colony of Canada as presenting many striking analogies with the case of Ireland. I said then that the relations between the provinces of Canada and the Dominion Parliament offered most suggestive precedents for dealing with all the difficulties of this most difficult case. Every one of the conditions laid down by Lord Hartington would be met by the adoption or by the adaptation of the internal Constitution of Canada. The Constitution of Canada preserves to the Dominion Parliament, which represents what the Imperial Parliament would represent in our case, its supreme authority. The subjects committed to the local Legislatures are strictly defined, are delegated, and not surrendered, and are subject in certain cases to revision and control. There is an analogy in the Constitution of Canada for the separate treatment of provinces which are distinct in race and which differ in religion. And, lastly, the administration of justice in Canada is under the control of the Dominion authority, and is absolutely independent and free from local pressure and from local interference. It is quite true that when I made this suggestion in the House of Commons it was received with jeers and ridicule by persons who probably knew as little of the Constitution of Canada as they evidently knew of the provisions o the Home Rule Bill (laughter and cheers). But at that time the circumstances were not favourable to the consideration of any alternative plan. Now I repeat the suggestion. I invite discussion and criticism, and I say that I am confident that on those lines a plan may, and I hope will, be found which will give to Ireland such a measure of local autonomy as will satisfy all just and reasonable desires, and at the same time preserve intact Imperial supremacy, and afford guarantees for the rights of minorities—(cheers)—and for the integrity of the Empire, which all parties are agreed must form essential features of any safe proposal (cheers).

WHAT IRISH LEADERS HAVE SAID.

But you will ask, "Will the Irish party accept a proposal of this kind?" I observe Mr. Sexton the other day, addressing a meeting at Sligo, was good enough specially to warn me that, whatever might be done at the conference, the Irish people would never rest until they had obtained their freedom and their independence. I am thankful to Mr. Sexton—(laughter)—for this frank and honest avowal, so unusual when Irish members are preparing smooth sayings for the consumption of credulous Liberals (laughter). It appears that Mr. Sexton thinks the Plan of Campaign may be applied to the British Parliament, and that Irish members may fix their own terms irrespectively of British or any other interests. All I can say is, that if this is his *ultimatum*, I hope and believe that the British people—not only those who voted against the Home Rule Bill, but the vast majority of the electorate—will meet him with an unequivocal negative (loud cheers). But I suppose that Mr. Sexton spoke only for himself, and I do not admit that at present he has authority to speak for the Irish party. Until Mr. Parnell is deposed—(laughter)—and Mr. Sexton assumes his place, which may, no doubt, occur in time—until that event happens, I prefer to look to Mr. Parnell as the only authorized exponent of Irish Nationalist policy, and Mr. Parnell is very well able to keep his own counsel, and to say what he has to say without reference to what his subordinates have said before him. All I can add is, that in recent times—I am not speaking of the old days of the Cincinnati speech, which, it appears, was misreported in every American newspaper (laughter), but in recent times, and since he has been correctly reported—he has never said anything inconsistent with the acceptance of such a plan as I have suggested (hear, hear). On the other hand, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, who is, I think, vice-chairman of the Parliamentary party, has in a long article declared that his plan of Home Rule would be based upon the establishment between England and Ireland of similar relations to those which exist between the provinces of Canada and the Dominion Parliament at Ottawa. In those circumstances I do not dismiss as absolutely impossible the hypothesis that the time may shortly

come when we shall all be once again a happy family. But, further, I would say this—if any scheme should be elaborated after full and public discussion—because no one supposes that anything which may be decided in secret conclave can be accepted without the fullest public criticism and public sanction—but if such a plan should be ultimately elaborated, if it should commend itself to the majority of the English and Scotch people, if it should satisfy the demands of patriotic and fair-minded Irishmen, I hope that the Irish people will give to it an impartial and a calm examination; and if they approve of it, that they will not allow anybody to stand between them and the boon which will be freely offered to them.

Gentlemen, I have completed the task which I undertook. I am painfully conscious of my inability to present an adequate view to you of this great subject. I would beg you, however, to bear in mind that I do not seek to commit you, or even myself, to the details of any possible plan. I do not attempt to pledge you by the illustration which I have used in order to make my meaning clear. There ought to be no hurry in dealing with a matter of such grave and vital importance. The American Constitution was two years in framing, and it was only brought to perfection after lengthened public discussion on the platform and in the press, and after the ablest minds in America had given to it their personal consideration. If our work is to be successful, it must be the result of the joint application of many minds (hear, hear). Let all and each of us bring our several contributions; let each and all take part in the erection of an edifice which we hope will be permanent and stable; let none stand aside hostile or indifferent (hear, hear). The object is of such vital importance to the interests of the nation that, believe me, history will deal hardly with any, great or small—with any man, however eminent or however obscure—who suffers personal feeling or party interests to hinder or prevent a consummation so devoutly to be wished for (loud and prolonged cheers).

THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA.

The Times, January 26th, 1887.

[Mr. R. B. Haldane, M.P., having written to *The Times*, asserting that the adoption of the Canadian Constitution would not meet the objections raised by Lord Hartington to Home Rule, Mr. Chamberlain replied as follows in the same newspaper.]

MR. R. B. HALDANE, in his letter of the 24th inst., disputes my assertion that the adoption or adaptation of the Canadian Internal Constitution would meet Lord Hartington's fundamental conditions. Will you allow me in reply to state the facts on which I base my contention? Lord Hartington's first condition is that the Imperial Parliament should continue to represent the whole, and not only a part, of the United Kingdom. Mr. Haldane admits that this is fully met by the Canadian Constitution. The second condition is that the powers given to any new local authority should be delegated and not surrendered. The case of Canada is, of course, not precisely analogous to that of Ireland, since Canada was and is a colony. The Constitution was established by an Act of the Imperial Parliament, and not of the Dominion Parliament, and the duty of the former was to distinguish and distribute between the Provincial Legislatures and the Dominion Parliament the authority which originally vested in itself. The Imperial Parliament has not, however, surrendered its right of controlling provincial legislation or even of concurrent legislation when it thinks well to exercise it. Even in Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill I believe it was contended by its supporters that this principle of delegation and not surrender was strictly observed. Thirdly, the subjects to be treated by the local authority are to be clearly defined, and to be subject to revision and control. Mr. Haldane admits that in the case of Canada,

the subjects are clearly defined, but he denies that they are subject to revision and control. With all deference to so great an authority, I desire to call his attention to the suggestive and instructive precedent which is contained in Clause 93 of the Act of Union. I should premise that in the case of Canada, the greatest difficulty was anticipated with regard to the religious question, and especially as it affected education. Accordingly the subject of education is referred to the Provincial Legislatures, subject to important statutory limits and conditions contained in sub-sections 1 and 2 of Clause 93. The clause then goes on to provide for an appeal to the Governor-General against any Act or decision of any provincial authority, and if he considers the conditions have not been fulfilled, or if his decision has not been respected by the Provincial Legislature, then "the Parliament of Canada may make remedial laws for the due execution of the provisions of this section and any decision of the Governor-General in Council under this section." If we apply these provisions by analogy to the case of Ireland it would be perfectly possible to make statutory conditions in respect of civil rights and property, for the protection of minorities, and to reserve the absolute power of legislation to the Imperial Parliament in case these conditions were not fulfilled. It appears to me that in these circumstances I was amply justified in saying that "the subjects committed to the local legislatures are subject in certain cases to revision and control." I should also like to call attention to Clause 94, which provides that the Parliament of Canada may make provision for the uniformity of all or any of the laws relative to property and civil rights, and that from and after the passing of any Act in that behalf "the power of the Parliament of Canada to make laws in relation to any matter comprised in any such Act shall, notwithstanding anything in this Act, be unrestricted." I have always understood that it was the intention of the framers of the Act of Union that property and civil rights should be legislated for uniformly by the Dominion Parliament; but that, owing to a diversity in the laws on this subject in the different provinces, it was thought necessary to leave the power of legislation with the Provincial Legislatures

until a general agreement had been come to for securing uniformity. Lastly, the administration of justice should remain with an authority responsible to the Imperial Parliament. Mr. Haldane admits that the criminal law and procedure in criminal matters, as well as the payment of judges, rest with the Dominion Parliament, and that the appointment of all the judges is in the hands of the Governor-General. It appears to me that this sufficiently satisfies Lord Hartington's condition. In conclusion, I may be permitted to point out that I have never pretended that the Constitution of Canada could be bodily transferred to settle the relations between Ireland and Great Britain. The exact nature of the adaptations which might be made is one of the questions on which I hope further discussion may throw light.

BIRMINGHAM, January 29th, 1887.

AMONG HIS OWN PEOPLE.

[Mr. Chamberlain addressed his constituents of West Birmingham, in the Birmingham Town Hall, on Saturday night. The meeting had been originally fixed for the 5th January, but owing to the postponement of the opening of Parliament, and the negotiations for the reunion of the Liberal party, it was thought desirable to defer it till the end of the month, when Mr. Chamberlain would be in a position to discuss the situation more freely.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, who was received with loud and continuous applause, said: Mr. Chairman and electors of West Birmingham,—I am very glad of the opportunity of meeting you at the very commencement of a session which promises to be more than usually important and arduous. I have never yet failed to gather from these great popular assemblies strength, and courage, and hope; and I always carry with me the sense, which has been confirmed by the resolution which you have just passed, that I enjoy your sympathy, that I can count upon the support of my own people (cheers). And I find in this reflection ample compensation for the anxieties and disappointments which no public man can altogether escape. There never was a time when the reciprocal confidence which ought to exist between a member and his constituents was more necessary. The political situation is unsatisfactory and changeable. No man can say what an hour may bring forth. It is impossible to lay down with certainty any definite course of action. All I can do is to sum up, as well as I may, the position as it presents itself to-day—to re-state the principles by which I have always been guided, and to ask you to trust me in the future as you have generously done in the past—(a voice—"And we will")—to do all that my ability and my

opportunities will allow in order to carry those principles into effect (a voice—"And we will, Joe," and laughter).

Lord Iddesleigh—a Tribute.

Before I proceed any further, I should like to be allowed to take this opportunity of expressing the feeling which I am sure we all entertain of the loss which the country has sustained in the death of Lord Iddesleigh (hear, hear, and applause), better known to us as Sir Stafford Northcote. He has passed away under circumstances which have lent a tragic interest to his death, after a long and active public life, in the course of which he never lost a friend and never made an enemy (applause). He was gifted with a singular sweetness of disposition; he was possessed of a natural fund of humour, which he often used to illustrate an argument, but never to wound an opponent. It has been sometimes said of him that he was not a fighting leader; but the qualities of his mind—his moderation, his fairness, and his scrupulous honesty—lent an overwhelming force to his reasoning, where perhaps more impetuous eloquence would have failed to convince. His place is now vacant. He has gone to join the great majority, and we who remain behind are sensible that we shall miss in him a conspicuous type of what was most honourable and most praiseworthy in our English public life (loud applause).

The History of a Year.

Mr. Chairman, it is little more than twelve months since I was first called upon in a special sense to represent West Birmingham. It was in November, 1885, that I made to you my first speech as a candidate for your representation; and I recall the date now because I want to remind you of the great and remarkable change which has taken place in the policy and the prospects of the Liberal party. At that time neither my colleagues in the representation of Birmingham nor myself thought it necessary to refer at any length to the Irish question. The Liberal Government had devoted a great portion of the time of the Parliament which had just expired to an honest endeavour to remedy Irish grievances. We had passed a Land

Bill almost revolutionary in its character, which had placed the Irish tenant in a position more favourable than that of any agricultural tenants on the face of the earth (applause). We had removed altogether the inequality of franchise as between Ireland and England, and we had called to the full enjoyment of their electoral rights the vast majority of the Irish people (hear, hear). But we had committed one unpardonable offence in the eyes of the Irish leaders: we had endeavoured, with more or less success, to maintain law and order in Ireland (cheers). I am not going now to attempt to justify all the details or the methods of our legislation, but our offence did not consist in the methods or the details. It consisted in the intention, and it was because of that intention we were denounced by the Irish party, and that a circular was issued to the Irish electors in every constituency urging them to vote for the Tories, and to vote against what the circular described as the "cowardly and servile herd that followed Mr. Gladstone" (laughter, and a voice—"So they are"). There appears to be a gentleman in the corner who still agrees with that description of the men who followed Mr. Gladstone. I do not sympathize with his view; but who would have thought that a few months after the issue of this circular the men who had been described in these flattering terms would be hand-in-glove with their revilers, and cheering them to the echo in the House of Commons when they exhausted their choice vocabulary of abuse on those who had been former leaders and members of the Liberal party? But that, gentlemen, is not the most remarkable or the most extraordinary change. The General Election of 1885 resulted in the return of a majority of nearly ninety Liberal members over their Tory opponents, and those men had a mandate from the constituencies to carry out the programme with which Mr. Gladstone entered into the contest, and many of them, the great majority of them, were also pledged to support those measures for the advantage of the working classes, which were collectively known under the name of the "unauthorized programme." But how have these pledges been fulfilled? We began very well. A few days after the opening of the session we turned out the Tory Government on

an amendment which committed the House of Commons to the most important point of the unauthorized programme—to that which pledged it to deal immediately with the claims of the agricultural labourers; but since that time nothing has been done.

MR. PARNELL BLOCKS THE PATH.

The authorized programme and the unauthorized programme have gone to the limbo of good intentions (laughter), and we are now told that nothing can be done for the people of England, of Scotland, or of Wales, until we have completely satisfied the demands of eighty-five Irish members of the so-called National party. Gentlemen, that is a hard saying—(hear, hear)—and I am not prepared to accept it (cheers). I admit the claims of Ireland; but England and Scotland have also claims upon the attention of Parliament (hear, hear). I admit that if it be possible to pass a measure which shall be satisfactory to the people of Ireland, which shall do something to bring peace where there has been war for centuries, and which at the same time shall commend itself to the majority of the people of Great Britain—I admit in that case it may be worth while to make further sacrifices, and to postpone yet a little while longer the legislation of which England and Scotland stand in so great need; but I do not admit that the terms of the settlement are to be dictated to us by a portion of the Irish representatives (cheers). They are not yet the sole arbiters of the fate of the United Kingdom. Others have to be consulted as well as they, and I deny their right or their power to reduce the Imperial Parliament to impotence because all their demands—whether they are reasonable or whether they are unreasonable—are not immediately satisfied. No. The measures for which we were fighting in 1885, they are as important, they are more urgent than ever (hear, hear). The condition of the people has not improved since then (hear, hear). The reform of our land laws, the spread of education, the just distribution of taxation—these things are as necessary now as they were twelve months ago (hear, hear), and they must not, and they shall not, be indefinitely postponed (cheers), because the Irish leaders, like spoiled children, are demanding

an impracticable form of government which would be as injurious to them as it would be dangerous to us (cheers). It is one thing to do—as I have often urged we should do—to consult Irish feeling and Irish prejudice in order, if possible, to meet Irish wishes so far as that may be consistent with still greater interests. But it is another thing altogether to say that we will, as some Liberal members and Liberal organs in the press are now not ashamed to say—that we will absolutely accept whatever these gentlemen are pleased to dictate to us (cheers). So long as this view is taken by any considerable section of the Liberal party, so long I say that party will be paralysed and condemned to impotence (hear, hear).

THE NEW DOCTRINE OF SUBSERVIENCY.

It is a new doctrine this, that there is to be a complete subservience to a minority and an abject surrender to a party which represents in this country quite as much a foreign and anti-English conspiracy as it does the Irish nation (cheers). Surely, gentlemen, the true principle for all of us is to examine impartially, without prejudice, this great question, with the most earnest desire to meet the wishes, to consult the interests of the Irish people; but, at the same time, not to ignore, never to forget, the interests and the wishes of the greater nation of which Ireland is only a part (cheers); and, finally, to do what is right and just, because it is right and just (cheers), and not because it is an ultimatum presented to us by those who, for the moment, claim to represent the majority of the Irish people (cheers). Just consider where this new doctrine will conduct us. We have been told that the Congress held at Leeds passed a resolution, which absolutely commits the Liberal party —(hear, hear)—to accept nothing which is not entirely satisfactory to the representatives of the Nationalist section of the Irish members. Well, I remember that there was a previous Leeds conference some time ago, which also passed a resolution in an off-hand way— (laughter)—for a party settlement of the question of the suffrage; but when the Conservative party showed that they were prepared to deal with this matter in a broad and generous spirit, Mr. Gladstone (cheers), as leader

of the Liberal party (loud cheers), and all his followers, gladly accepted a national settlement of this question, and they did not think that they were bound by the resolution of the Leeds Congress.

HOME RULE NO PARTY QUESTION.

And so now, if the Conservative party should be willing, in regard to this greatest of all questions, to endeavour to heal this open sore of Ireland—which is infinitely more dangerous to the vital interests of the United Kingdom than any restriction of suffrage—if they should be prepared without prejudice to deal with this matter, to seek with us a solution of the question, I for one would rejoice at this proof of their patriotism, and I would see in it the best augury of a successful result (cheers). The fact is that I want the democracy of Great Britain, independently of the narrow lines of party division (hear, hear), to endeavour to meet, in a fair and generous spirit, the Irish people (cheers), and to satisfy them so far as may be consistent with common interests. But if they are to do this, they must not abandon their right of independent judgment—they must not pledge themselves beforehand to accept whatever the Irish members may demand. If they were to do that, what would be the use of discussion? In that case all we have to do is to approach Mr. Parnell on our knees—and to beg of him to be good enough to state the terms of peace which we are, forsooth, to be ready to accept, whatever they may prove to be. There is another consideration which bears upon this question. No one who is not wilfully blind can ignore the statements and speeches which have been made by the Irish leaders prior to the introduction of Mr. Gladstone's Bill. They varied in language, but they were all to the same effect—that they would be satisfied with nothing which did not give them the independence of their nation, and which did not break the last link which bound Ireland to England (hear, hear). Well, they may now be willing to take less than that—(laughter)—as an instalment (renewed laughter). But if we are to make their wishes our sole guide, it is simply dishonest to pretend to satisfy them at the same time that we refuse to them the most important part of their demand. The Glad-

stonian Liberals repudiate now with heat and indignation the term of "Separatist." They repudiate it as hotly as, eighteen months ago, they repudiated the idea of Home Rule (laughter). But their position is inconsistent. In one breath they tell us that the first condition of any settlement is that we must satisfy the Irish members, and in the same breath they tell us that nothing will induce them to concede to the Irish members their original and most important demand. They are in a dilemma—and I respectfully call their attention to it—either that they must be prepared to concede to the Irish members separation itself, if ever and whenever the Irish members ask for it,—and in that case be sure we shall not wait long (laughter),—or else they must repudiate altogether this new doctrine of absolute subserviency, and the abandonment of the right of judgment on the part of English Liberals (cheers).

Reunion Possible.

Now, having said so much by way of preface (laughter, and cheers), I tell you, gentlemen, that I believe that the reunion of the Liberal party and the settlement of this Irish question are now possible (loud cheers). But they are only possible if all concerned—Irish as well as English—bring to the discussion a spirit of moderation, and a spirit of mutual consideration (hear, hear, and cheers). I believe that the English people—the British people—will approve a policy of conciliation; but, gentlemen, we are not sunk so low, our condition is not so hopeless, that we should be forced to accept a policy of surrender (cheers), and I make my appeal to all earnest and reasonable Liberals, to whatever section they may belong, to all who deplore the impotence to which the party has been reduced, to all who desire that this breach should be healed, if it can be done, without sacrifice of honour or principles (hear, hear). They have been too silent, much too silent, lately, and they have left the field to irresponsible politicians (hear, hear), to the apostles of confusion and disorder—(laughter, and cheers)—who find it to their profit, and will not forego their opportunities. In consequence of our divisions these political mischief-makers (hear, hear), Mother Carey's chickens (loud

laughter and cheers), blown from borough to borough, and from constituency to constituency—are endeavouring to bully the Unionist Liberals into submission by threatening them with political extinction (laughter). Gentlemen, I do not think that we hold our political lives at the mercy of such gentry as these (laughter, and cheers). They were equally confident on the occasion of the last General Election, and they were grievously disappointed (laughter). In any case, the Unionist Liberals have taken their course with a full knowledge of the sacrifices which it might involve; they have staked their seats, and they have staked their political fortunes; ay, and we will stake them again—(loud cheers)—in defence of what we have believed to be the supreme interests of the nation. After all, our fate is a small matter. They may, if they can, extinguish our Parliamentary party; but what is important, and what is certain, is that the Unionist Liberals in the country are increasing in numbers (cheers), and that the Unionists form at the present moment—(interruption, and a voice—"Liverpool," followed by cheers)—that the Unionists are growing in the country, even in the Exchange Division of Liverpool (renewed cheers), and that at all events they form a body sufficiently powerful to resist the efforts of any—(cries of "No," "Yes," and cheers)—who may be supposed to be in alliance with the enemies of this country (hear, hear), or who may rightly be suspected of tampering with the integrity of the kingdom (cheers). Let there be no mistake. We are anxious—we are eager—for union. We are willing to go a long way to meet our former friends (hear, hear). We have laid ourselves open to much misconception by making the first advances. But there are limits to the concession—(cheers)—which can be demanded of us; and unless there is an equal reasonableness on the part of our former friends, upon their shoulders must rest the responsibilty—(hear, hear)—of the further disaster and confusion which will fall upon the Liberal party. Our work awaits us, and it is of the most important character. The fields are ripe for harvest, and the labourers stand with their sickles in their hands; but they are condemned to face each other in forced inactivity, because of the divisions of their leaders. Gentle-

men, it is for you—it is for the rank and file throughout the country—to say whether these divisions shall be permanent, and whether this inglorious inactivity shall long continue (hear, hear).

THE CLOUDS ARE BREAKING.

I was speaking last week at Hawick, and I ventured to express sanguine hopes with regard to the future. At the same time I endeavoured to indicate in very broad and general terms the nature of a settlement which I thought might be generally acceptable. I have been encouraged by the tone of the criticisms and observations which have since been made upon that speech. I did not expect—I should have been foolish to do so—that my proposals, if they can be called proposals, would be at once and entirely accepted. I put them before the country as suggestions—as the basis of a discussion from which I hoped might proceed a more definite and a more perfect plan. There is one remark which has been made, the justice of which I fully admit. It has been said that my scheme, so far as I developed it, is so vague and shadowy that it could not be accepted in its present form (hear, hear). That is perfectly true. I might have gone into much greater detail, because you will understand that I should never venture even to put these broad outlines before the country unless I had worked out in my own mind the details of a more perfect and a consistent scheme (hear, hear). But I did not think it wise—I thought it would be presumptuous in me—to put before the country any scheme in detail until my ideas had been submitted to and amended by those with whom I was in consultation. I did not wish—I do not wish now—to anticipate or forestall the result of the further deliberations in which we are engaged. I am convinced that no scheme will have a real chance of success which is not built up by the contributions of different persons approaching the question from many points of view. With that observation I will proceed to notice one or two of the objections which have been taken, in order that I may give some little explanation; but in doing so I beg you to understand that I am stating my own opinion only, and that I am not endeavouring to commit any other person. I have been asked

to explain more fully my proposals with regard to the land in Ireland.

THE FARMER MUST OWN HIS FARM.

I said at Hawick that I believed that the agrarian question in Ireland constituted our greatest difficulty, and that until and unless it were solved no extension of self-government in that country was possible or desirable. I said that in my opinion the solution was only to be found by the practical abolition of the system of dual ownership, which has been tried and has failed; and I said, lastly, that I thought that public opinion in Great Britain would not submit to any proposal which laid upon the British taxpayer an excessive burden or risk for the benefit of the Irish landlords. Thereupon it has been suggested that I proposed to compel the Irish landowner to accept a much smaller income without in any way improving his security. Well, that is not my proposal. I do not think that it would be a fair proposal. My idea is that the true principle of a fair rent is that it can only accrue after the tenant has received reasonable return for his labour; but when this condition has been fulfilled, then comes in the right of the landlord to a fair rent; and after the fair rent has been established upon this basis, then, I say, it would not be right to ask the landowner to accept anything less than that fair rent, unless you can greatly improve the character of his security. Well, gentlemen, I believe that there are ways, that there are means of greatly improving the security of the landlord without laying risk on the British taxpayer (hear, hear). How that may be done, the details of the scheme for doing it, I prefer to reserve for the present (laughter, and cheers). But what I want to make clear is that whenever a scheme is proposed it should be judged by whether or no it fulfils these intentions and this object. I have some confidence that one result of the conference in which we are engaged will be that we shall be able to solve this problem, which appears at the present moment insoluble to so many of our critics (cheers).

HOME RULE—CLEARING THE WAY.

Then I am asked whether I am prepared to admit the idea of a legislative authority or authorities in Ireland; whether I am

willing to concede to them a dependent executive. Now, I think there is some confusion of idea upon this subject; at all events, I am not clever enough to define what people mean by a "dependent executive." If it means that these legislative authorities—these subordinate authorities—should have a military, or a quasi-military, force at their disposal, or that they should have the control and the administration of justice, then I say "No" (cheers),—emphatically "No" (continued cheering). I know that such a proceeding would be entirely contrary to the precedent of the Canadian constitution, to which I refer, and I believe it would be dangerous to the security of the United Kingdom. But there is possibly another meaning attached to the words "dependent executive." If you take the case of any subordinate local authority—the case, for instance, of the Town Council of Birmingham—you will find that they have the power to appoint and maintain an executive in connection with their administration. The Town Council of Birmingham elects its mayor, who is the worthy and distinguished head of the corporation; the Town Council of Birmingham appoints and pays its town clerk and its borough treasurer, and its borough surveyor and its engineers, and a host of officers who are appointed as the staff to carry out its work. Is that what is meant by a dependent executive? If so, I say that you cannot deny it to any legislative authority which you may establish in Ireland. If you were to establish to-morrow a legislative authority in Belfast, a legislative authority in Dublin; if you were to give to them the power of dealing with certain domestic business, with education, with local government, with public works, and similar matters—if you were to transfer to them the administration of Dublin Castle—of those Dublin boards which deal with similar subjects, you would have, as a matter of course, to allow them to appoint an executive to carry out the details of their business—to appoint them, to select them, to pay them: and if that is what is meant, there is certainly no difference of opinion upon the matter. More than that, you must allow them to organize some form of government. What the exact form of government is to be is a matter which, in my judgment, concerns them much more than it does us. I should

think that if they were anxious to be economical and business-like, they would have as little red tape and form as possible (hear, hear), that they would be satisfied with a standing committee or council, with permanent officers of some kind of another; but if they thought that they could be better served by imitating the cumbrous forms of our Parliamentary Government; if they desire to have a Ministry—a Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture, a Minister of Public Works, and a Minister of Education, and a Cabinet—and to imitate on a small scale everything that goes on at Westminster and in Parliament Street, and at Whitehall, all I can say again is that that seems to me to be a matter entirely for their discretion, and with which I, at all events, have no desire whatever to interfere (cheers).

The Imperial Parliament must be Supreme.

Well, then, I am asked another question, which should be taken in conjunction with the last. I have said that the control and supremacy of the Imperial Parliament must be maintained (hear, hear), and, therefore, it has been alleged that I desire that every subject which comes before, and is dealt with by the local legislative authority in pursuance of its delegated powers, should come under the review of the Imperial Parliament, and that there should be a harassing interference and perpetual control as between the greater and the less of these two bodies. Well, gentlemen, that is not my idea; I have never said anything of the kind (cheers). I believe, and I have said, that it is essential to reserve the control of the Imperial Parliament, but I think that the exercise of that control should be as infrequent and as exceptional as possible. What is really important—and I beg you to dwell upon this idea—what is really important is that the Imperial Parliament should be able, in case its interference becomes necessary in order to prevent abuse, to count upon some authority (hear, hear), some force—not the military force—in order to carry out its decrees (hear, hear). One of the greatest objections to the Home Rule Bill of Mr. Gladstone was that if any of the statutory conditions of that Bill were violated, whether they were of the most trifling

character, or whether they were of the greatest importance, there were no means of securing their observance, except by the employment of the Imperial army and by the reconquest of Ireland (hear, hear). Therefore it is a cardinal point that the Imperial Government should have always at its disposal, in case of need, some civil force which will enable it to execute its own decrees, to secure itself against abuse, to maintain the statutory provisions which it may impose, and to secure respect to the decrees of any court which may have to decide upon such questions.

COULD WE TRUST AN IRISH LEGISLATURE?

Well, then, I am asked whether it is really possible, following the precedent of the Canadian constitution, to entrust legislation, upon civil rights and property, to a legislative authority sitting in Ireland. My answer is, in the first place, that if the great cause of social strife—the agrarian question—were first dealt with, if all the complications arising from the dual ownership of land were removed, I believe that civil rights and property would be just as safe in Ireland as in other parts of the United Kingdom. But my second point is this: that it is perfectly possible, according to the precedents, both of the constitution of the United States, and of the constitution of Canada to impose statutory provisions upon the exercise of the authority delegated to the subordinate local legislatures, and that if the Imperial Government had an executive force to carry out its will under those circumstances, civil rights and rights of property, and the rights of the minority, would be sufficiently guaranteed. Well, gentlemen, there are a good number of other criticisms and observations which have been made, which in due time I should like to refer to, but to which now it will be unnecessary for me to advert. All I want to tell you is this: that, as far as I have seen, there is nothing in any of these objections which raises questions of principle which need divide us, or be an obstacle to our reunion (cheers). I have no doubt that in the further discussions which are to take place—and which may very likely be somewhat protracted, because of the complicated nature of the subjects with which we have to

deal—I have no doubt that in these discussions we shall be able, by friendly intercommunication of ideas, to find a solution for all these difficulties.

Work for Parliament.

But while the conference proceeds upon its task, and endeavours to find the basis for the reunion of the Liberal party, I hope that Parliament will not be idle. From the statement which was made on Thursday—the opening night of the Session—it appears that our attention is to be called, in the first instance, to two subjects—to the reform of procedure in the House of Commons, and to the amendment of the criminal law in Ireland. Now, as regards procedure in Parliament, I am glad to think that the proposals of the Government are good and reasonable as far as they go. I could wish that they were even carried further, and I may hope that amendments will be accepted which will somewhat strengthen them. But in any case, I am so much impressed with the necessity for restoring the efficiency of Parliament, that I am prepared to give the heartiest support to any proposals which tend in that direction. The House of Commons is thoroughly representative of the whole people—the great instrument and machinery by which alone the popular will can be expressed; and under these circumstances I think that any one who weakens its authority, or paralyses its freedom, is disloyal to the democracy, and an enemy to reform and progress (cheers). And I hope the constituencies will watch our debates, that they will mark with their displeasure those who, under any pretence, sustain abuses which have to a considerable extent destroyed the power and the authority of the mother of Parliaments, and which have prevented it from giving full expression to the national will.

Law and Order.

But, gentlemen, the second question—and a question of even greater importance—is the restoration of law and order in Ireland (cheers). That is a measure which, we are told, must accompany, if it does not precede, any concession of extended rights in that country. I am not going to shirk the question (hear, hear), and I am the more disposed to discuss it with you

because I have read recently statements made by persons who call themselves Radicals, which seem to me to be absolutely inconsistent with true Radical doctrines (hear, hear). I observed the other day a speech made by a friend of mine who is the Radical member for one of the divisions of Yorkshire. He said that obedience to the law was all very well; but that if the law was a bad law, he held it to be his duty and his right to disobey it. I think it possible that my honourable friend was thinking only of those exceptional cases in which a man may feel a conscientious objection to a particular law, and may accordingly offer to it passive resistance, taking all the consequences, and making the sacrifices which it involves; but that is no parallel to what is going on in Ireland (hear, hear). If you could suppose that Church rates should be re-enacted in this country, I do not hesitate to say that I should refuse to pay them (laughter); I should allow my goods to be taken in execution. But, gentlemen, I should not barricade my house, I should not throw hot water over the police (laughter), I should not shoot the parson from behind the hedge (cheers), and I should not denounce the ministers of the law, who are honestly doing their duty—(cheers)—in endeavouring to carry it into effect; and I should not hold them up to vengeance if ever I came into power (cheers). If, however, my honourable friend meant that every man who thought a law to be bad was justified in giving it open and violent resistance, then I should like to point out to him that his doctrine is destructive of all law, for there is no law which ever has been passed, or which ever can be passed, which the law-breakers do not think to be bad (cheers). Such a theory as this would make every man judge in his own case—would enable every one to do what was right in his own eyes. No, gentlemen; if a law is bad, let us strenuously endeavour to amend it (hear, hear); but as long as it exists, respect for the law, because it is the law, because it is the collective expression of society, the voice of the community for the protection of all its members, is the only thing which stands between us and that pernicious doctrine that might makes right, which it has been the boast and the glory of the democracy to supersede (loud cheers).

What is the Law?

What is the law? The law is the security of the weak against the strong (hear, hear). It is the protection of the poor against the rich; it is the safeguard of the few against the many. If you destroy the law, which is the highest expression of the democratic idea of equality, you will have to take your choice between anarchy on the one hand and despotism on the other (cheers), and to my mind it is a suicidal course for any Radical to take to lay sacrilegious hands on this great edifice of our freedom (hear, hear). What is the state of things in Ireland? In Ireland the law is violently resisted and openly abused. It is not the law of rent or the law of evictions which is in question. Those are the laws which may be, which I think ought to be amended (cheers), in order that they may be less stringent and more merciful; but it is the law against assassination, the law against intimidation, the law against theft (cheers), which is habitually violated. For these violations there is no excuse. I am not prepared, even in this state of things, to support what can properly be described as coercive legislation—that is to say, such measures as the establishment of martial law or the suspension of Habeas Corpus, or any legislation generally restricting the liberty of the subject (hear, hear).

If Crime Triumphs, Strengthen the Law.

But if it be necessary in order that the law should be respected, to amend and strengthen the ordinary law of the country, I am prepared to give fair and full consideration to any proposals which may be made to that effect (loud cheers), and I will fortify myself by a quotation from an authority that cannot be suspected of any tenderness to coercive measures or of any lack of sympathy with Ireland. "Murder and outrage," says this gentleman, "are not to be allowed in Ireland any more than they are to be allowed anywhere else. If there is a general attack on property all along the line, it must be resisted. The question is how you are to suppress and punish murder and outrage, and how the Government is to deal with an organized attack on property. The answer is, by a vigorous execution of the law as it stands, and by a regular and formal

alteration of the law if it demands alteration." That is a quotation from the writings of my friend Mr. John Morley (cheers), the late Chief Secretary of Ireland, and in the spirit of that quotation I am, as I always have been, prepared to act (hear, hear).

A SUMMARY.

Well, gentlemen, let me attempt to summarise the remarks which I have addressed to you. I am ready to support in Parliament in the present session all efforts to restore order in Parliament and to maintain the law in Ireland. But that is not enough (hear, hear). We have a right to expect from the Government a constructive as well as a negative policy in Great Britain and in Ireland alike. If their legislation for Great Britain is conceived in a Liberal spirit, I shall thankfully accept it without reference to the quarter from which it comes (applause); but if it is reactionary or totally inadequate, the Government must take the responsibility of breaking up the Unionist party, for they know perfectly well that they cannot expect, and have not obtained, any pledge of unconditional support from any Liberal (cheers). As regards the Irish question, I believe that the time is favourable for a great and further effort to find a satisfactory and, it may be, a final solution. Both parties in the State have independently tried to arrive at it, and hitherto our party divisions have frustrated their endeavours. Doubtless it would be a glorious achievement for any statesman or any party to give peace to Ireland and security to the United Kingdom. But it would be still more glorious to our patriotism, to our capacity for government, and to our free institutions, if, putting aside party passion and party prejudice, all sections could combine to seek and find a solution of this historic problem, and to relieve us from this perpetual nightmare of Irish disaffection. Gentlemen, it is not the reunion of the Liberal party, great and important as that end is, which should be the chief or only object; it is the cordial and indefeasible union of a nation which justifies and demands the strenuous and unselfish efforts of all our statesmen.

APPENDIX.

HOLLOWAY, June 17th, 1885.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

[A portion of the following extract has been often quoted during the recent controversy. The speech was delivered at the time when what is known as the scheme for National Councils found favour with Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell, and it contains an argument in favour of a great extension of local government, not in Ireland only, but also in other parts of the United Kingdom. The extract does not properly find a place in a volume of speeches dealing exclusively with the Irish question, but it is added here in order that the record of Mr. Chamberlain's utterances on the subject may be complete.]

I HAVE not left myself time, and it was not my intention, to-night to enter into any detail upon the probable course of future legislation, but there is one point of such great and exceptional importance that, with your permission, I should like to say a few words about it before I sit down. I believe that the first duty and the chief obligation of the new Parliament will be the completion and extension of our system of local government. That is a necessary preliminary to almost any change in other directions. Temperance reform, the reform of taxation, and the great social questions which are pressing for solution, all depend on the creation and extension of satisfactory local government. Local government is the system whereby alone, as I believe, these matters may be properly and effectually dealt with. It is by its means only that we can hope to confront the destitution, and the misery, and the disease, and the crime which are the great blots on our civilization. The health and

the comfort of the poor in our midst, their means of education, their opportunities of enjoyment—all these may be provided and increased by the intelligent co-operation of all the citizens for the common good; and if the functions of local government were increased, I believe we might do something to grapple with these great and lamentable evils. Let me for a moment turn aside to ask you to consider the causes of the depression under which at this moment we are labouring. It is said sometimes that that is the result of over-production. Well, it may be easy perhaps to produce too many manufactures—to produce too much cotton, or too much coal, or too much iron for the necessities of the country; but you cannot produce too much food as long as there are millions of our fellow-countrymen who are in need of the barest necessaries. The object of statesmen should be to increase the production of the land, and I do not think that is possible under our present system. I believe we should direct our efforts to multiplying the number of landowners, to restoring to their place in our history and on our soil of that race of yeomen who have been almost extinguished by mistaken legislation.

And, gentlemen, this great and important object, which will do so much, not merely for the country, but for the towns, which suffer at the present time from the inroad of labourers from the country, can only be accomplished by some extension of the duties and powers of local authorities, which, with full knowledge of local needs and local necessities, may bring the whole resources of the community in aid of the consummation which it is in the interest of rich and poor alike to secure. But the question has another side, which is even of greater importance. It is a national question as well as a parochial question, and the pacification of Ireland at this moment depends, I believe, on the concession to Ireland of the right to govern itself in the matter of its purely domestic business. What is the alternative? Are you content, after nearly eighty years of failure, to renew once more the dreary experience of repressive legislation? Is it not discreditable to us that even now it is only by unconstitutional means that we are able to secure peace and order in one portion of Her Majesty's dominions? I do

not believe that the great majority of Englishmen have the slightest conception of the system under which this free nation attempts to rule the sister country. It is a system which is founded on the bayonets of 30,000 soldiers encamped permanently as in a hostile country. It is a system as completely centralized and bureaucratic as that with which Russia governs Poland, or as that which prevailed in Venice under the Austrian rule. An Irishman at this moment cannot move a step—he cannot lift a finger in any parochial, municipal, or educational work, without being confronted with, interfered with, controlled by, an English official, appointed by a foreign Government, and without a shade or shadow of representative authority. I say the time has come to reform altogether the absurd and irritating anachronism which is known as Dublin Castle. That is the work to which the new Parliament will be called, and I believe that by its successful accomplishment it will do more to secure the strength, the character, and the influence of the nation, than by the addition of any amount, however large, to the expenditure of the nation for naval or military purposes—that it will go further to maintain our weight in the councils of Europe than by any amount of bluster in our relations with foreign countries, and that it will do more to promote the true interests of the people of the United Kingdom than by any extension of the Empire, which it is our business to govern well and wisely before we seek to multiply our responsibilities or enlarge our obligations.

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